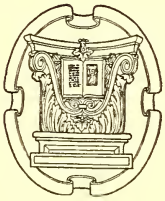

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LETTERS & LETTERING

A TREATISE WITH 200 EXAMPLES

FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN



BOSTON
BATES & GUILD COMPANY
MCMIX

SEVENTH THOUSAND

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NOTE

This book is intended for those who have felt the need of a varied collection of alphabets of standard forms, arranged for convenient use.

The alphabets illustrated, while primarily intended to exhibit the letter shapes, have in most cases been so arranged as to show also how the letters compose into words, except in those instances where they are intended to be used only as initials. The application of classic and medieval letters to modern usages has been, as far as possible, suggested by showing modern designs in which similar forms are employed.

In view of the practical aim of this treatise it has been deemed advisable to include a larger number of illustrative examples rather than to devote space to the historical evolution of the letter forms.

To the artists, American and European, who have so kindly furnished him with drawings of their characteristic letters — and without whose cordial assistance this book would hardly have been possible — to the master-printers who have allowed him to show types specially designed for them, and to the publishers who have given him permission to borrow from their books and magazines, the author wishes to express his sincere obligations.

F. C. B.

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CHAPTER I

ROMAN CAPITALS

In speaking of the "Roman" letter throughout this chapter its capital form — the form in monumental use among the Romans — will always be implied. The small or "minuscule" letters, which present nomenclature includes under the general title of "Roman" letters, and which will be considered in the following chapter, were of later formation than the capitals; and indeed only attained their definitive and modern form after the invention of printing from movable types.

The first point to be observed in regard to the general form of the Roman capital is its characteristic squareness. Although the letter as used to-day varies somewhat in proportions from its classic prototype, its skeleton is still based on the square.

Next to this typical squareness of outline, the observer should note that the Roman letter is composed of thick and thin lines. At first sight it may seem that no systematic rules determine which of these lines should be thick and which thin; but closer investigation will discover that the alternate widths of line were evolved quite methodically, and that they exactly fulfil the functions of making the letters both more legible and more decorative. Arbitrary rearrangements of these thick and thin lines, differing from the arrangement of them in the classic examples, have,

indeed, been often attempted; but such rearrangements have never resulted in improvement, and, except in eccentric lettering, have fallen into complete disuse.

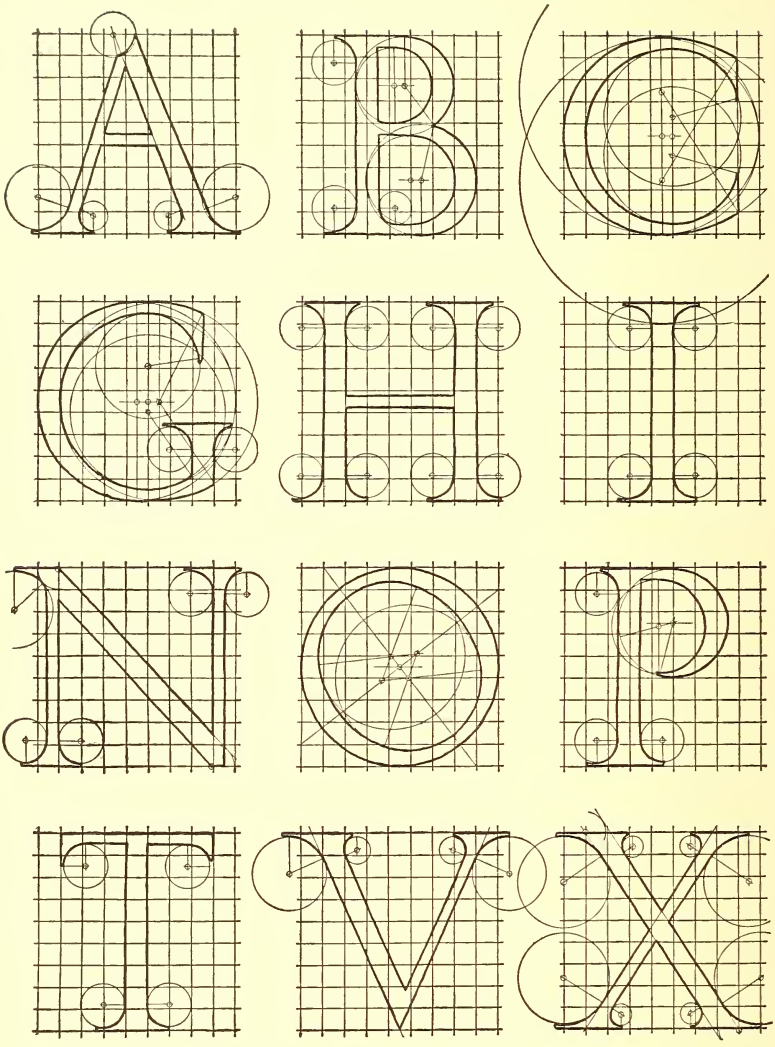
The original thickening and thinning of the lines of the classic Roman capitals was partly due to the imitation in stone inscriptions of the letter forms as they were written on parchment with the pen. The early Latin scribes held their stiff-nibbed reed pens almost directly upright and at right angles to the writing surface, so that a down stroke from left to right and slanted at an angle of about forty-five degrees would bring the nib across the surface broadwise, resulting in the widest line possible to the pen. On the other hand, a stroke drawn at right angles to this, the pen being still held upright, would be made with the thin edge of the nib, and would result in the narrowest possible line. From this method of handling the pen the variations of line width in the standard Roman forms arose; and we may therefore deduce three logical rules, based upon pen use, which will determine the proper distribution of the thick and thin lines:

I, Never accent horizontal lines. II, Always accent the sloping down strokes which run from left to right, including the so-called "swash" lines, or flying tails, of Q and R; but never weight those which, contrariwise, slope up from left to right, with a single exception in the case of the letter Z, in which, if rule I be followed, the sloping line (in this case made with a down stroke) will be the only one possible to accent. III, Always accent the directly perpendicular lines, except in the N, where these lines seem originally to have been made with an up stroke of the pen; and the first line of the M, where the perpendiculars originally sloped in towards the top of the letter (see 2). On the round letters

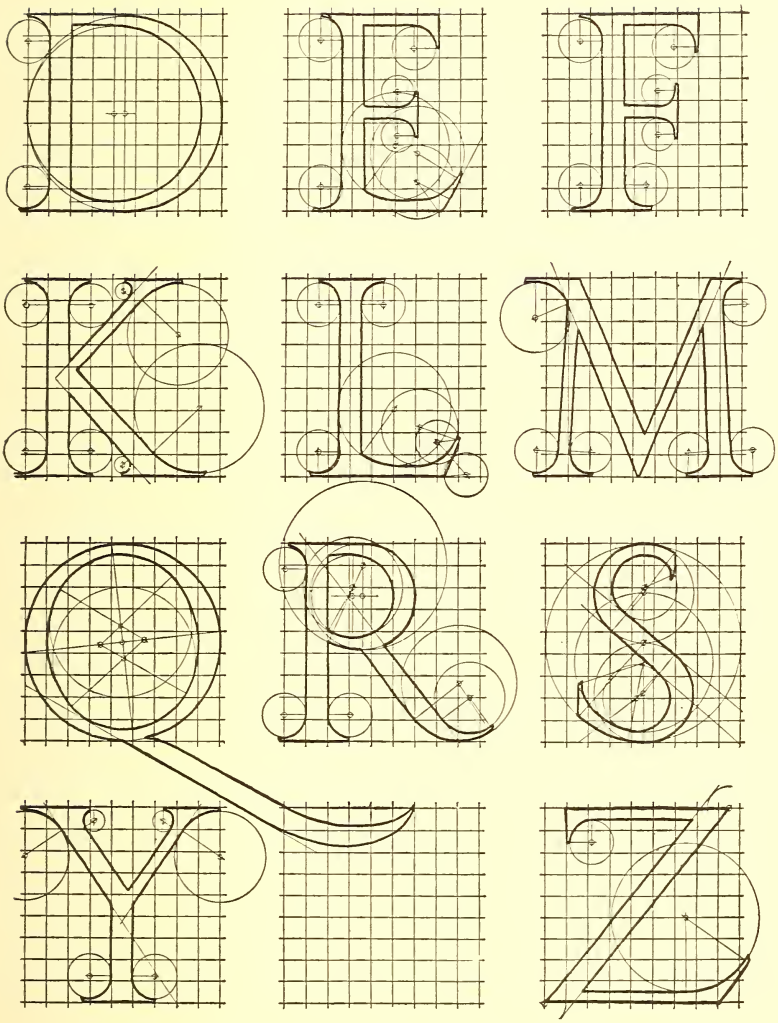
the accents should occur at the sides of the circle, as virtually provided in rule III, or on the upper right and lower left quarters (see 1-2), where in pen-drawn letters the accent of the down sloping stroke would naturally occur, as virtually determined in rule II.

The "serif" — a cross-stroke or tick — finishes the free ends of all lines used in making a Roman capital. The value of the serif in stone-cut letters seems obvious. To define the end of a free line a sharp cut was made across it with the chisel, and as the chisel was usually wider than the thin line this cut extended beyond it. Serifs were added to the ends of the thick lines either for the sake of uniformity, or may have been suggested by the chisel-marked guide lines themselves. Indeed in late stone-cut Roman work the scratched guide lines along the top and bottom of each line of the inscription are distinctly marked and merge into the serifs, which extend farther than in earlier examples. The serif was adopted in pen letters probably from the same reasons that caused it to be added to the stone-cut letters, namely, that it definitely finished the free lines and enhanced the general squareness and finish of the letter's aspect.

An excellent model for constructing the Roman capitals in a standard form will be found in the beautiful adaptation by Mr. A. R. Ross, 1 and 2, from an alphabet of capitals drawn by Sebastian Serlio, an Italian architect, engraver and painter of the sixteenth century, who devised some of the most refined variants of the classic Roman letter. Serlio's original forms, which are shown in 39 and 40, were intended for pen or printed use; but in altering Serlio's scheme of proportions it will be observed that Mr. Ross



1. ALPHABET AFTER SERLIO RECONSTRUCTED BY ALBERT R. ROSS



2. ALPHABET AFTER SERLIO RECONSTRUCTED BY ALBERT R. ROSS

has partially adapted the letter for use in stone, and has further varied it in details, notably in serif treatment. In most modern stone-cut letters, however, the thin strokes would be made even wider than in this example, as in 14. Mr. Ross's adaptation shows excellently how far the classic letters do or do not fill out the theoretical square.

Width proportions, which may be found useful in laying out lettering for lines of a given length, are shown in 3 in a more modern style of the Roman capital. In the classic Roman letter the cross-bar is usually in the exact center of the letter height, but in 3 the center line has been used as the bottom of the cross-bar in B, E, H, P, and R, and as the top of the cross-bar in A; and in letters like K, Y and X the "waist lines," as the meeting points of the sloping lines are sometimes called, have been slightly raised to obtain a more pleasant effect.

The Roman alphabet, although the one most in use, is unfortunately the most difficult to compose into words artistically, as the spacing between the letters plays a great share in the result. The effect of even color over a whole panel is obtained by keeping as nearly as possible the same area of white between each letter and its neighbor; but the shape of this area will be determined in every case by the letters which happen to be juxtaposed. Individual letters may, however, be widened or condensed to help fill an awkward "hole" in a line of lettering; — the lower lobe of the B may be extended, the center bar of the E pulled out (in which case the F should be made to correspond), the lower slant stroke of the K may be used as a swash tail, and the R may have its tail extended or drawn closely back against the upright line, and so on. Indeed, each and



3. WIDTH PROPORTIONS OF MODERN ROMAN CAPITALS F.C.B.

every letter of the alphabet is susceptible to such similar modifications in shape as may make it best suit the space left for it by its neighbors. Observe, for example, the spacing of the word MERITAE in 34, and notice how the tail of the R is lengthened to hold off the I because the T on the other side is perforce held away by its top. In the page of capitals, 124, by Mr. Bridwell, see also how the different spacing of the word FRENCH in the first and second lines is managed. In the advertisement, 123, also by Mr. Bridwell, note how the letters are spaced close or wide in order to produce a definite effect. The whole problem of spacing is, however, one of such subtle interrelation and composition, that it can only be satisfactorily solved by the artistic sense of the designer. Any rules which might be here formulated would prove more often a drawback than a help.

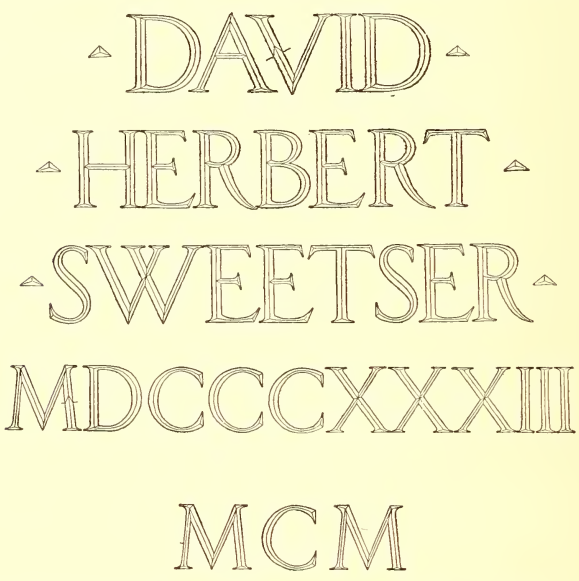
Certain optical illusions of some of the Roman letter forms should be briefly mentioned. These illusions are caused by the failure of certain letters to impinge squarely with determining serifs against the demarking top and bottom guide lines. The round letters C, G, O and Q often seem to be shorter and smaller than the other characters in a word unless the outsides of their curves run both above and below the guide lines. For the same reason S should be sometimes slightly increased in height, though in this case the narrowness of the letter makes less increase necessary; and J, on account of its kern, is governed by the same conditions as S, save when letters with distinct serifs come closely against it at the bottom. Theoretically the right side of D would require similar treatment, but actually this is seldom found necessary. The pointed ends of

the letters V and W should, for similar optical reasons, be extended slightly below the bottom guide lines, the amount of this extension being determined by the letters on each side of them. In the A, the Roman letterer at first got over the optical difficulty caused by its pointed top by running this letter also higher than its neighbors; but he later solved the problem by shaping its apex as shown in 1, thus apparently getting the letter into line with its companions while still obtaining a sufficient width of top to satisfy the eye. Because of its narrowness, I should generally be allowed more proportionate white space on either side of it than the wider letters.

Some idea of the proportionate variations required to counteract the optical illusions of the letters above named may be obtained from the practice of type-founders. In making the designs for a fount of type, it has been customary to first draw each letter at a very large size. Taking an arbitrary height of twelve inches as a standard, the points of A and V were made to extend about three-quarters of an inch above or below the guides, the letter O was run over about half an inch at both top and bottom, and the points of the W were made to project about the same distance. In pen lettering, however, it is possible and preferable to adapt each letter more perfectly to its individual surroundings by judgment of the eye than to rely upon any hard and fast rules.

Certain variations between the stone-cut forms of the Roman letters and their forms as drawn or printed should be understood before an intelligent adaptation of stone forms to drawn forms, or the opposite, is possible. When drawn or printed a character is seen in black against a

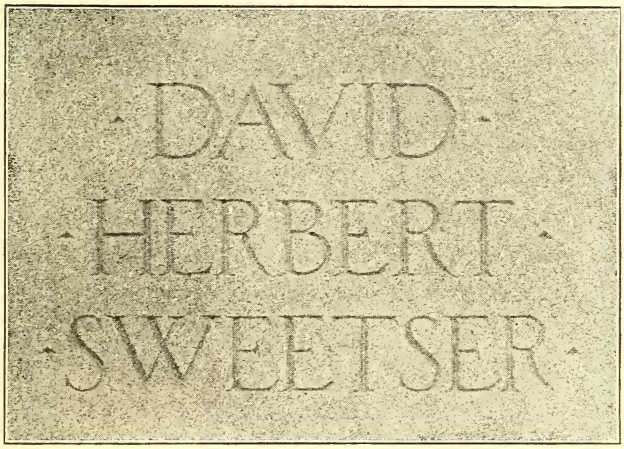
white ground with no illusory alterations of its line widths caused by varying shadows. In stone-cut letters, on the other hand, where the shadows rather than the outlines themselves reveal the forms, different limitations govern the problem. The thin lines of a letter to be v-sunk



4. DRAWING FOR INCISED ROMAN CAPITALS IN GRANITE F.C.B.

should generally be made slightly thicker in proportion to the wide lines than is the case with the pen-drawn letter, especially as the section is likely to be less deeply and sharply cut nowadays than in the ancient examples, for the workmanship of to-day seems to be less perfect and the materials used more friable. A slight direct sinkage before beginning to cut the v-sunk section is a useful method of

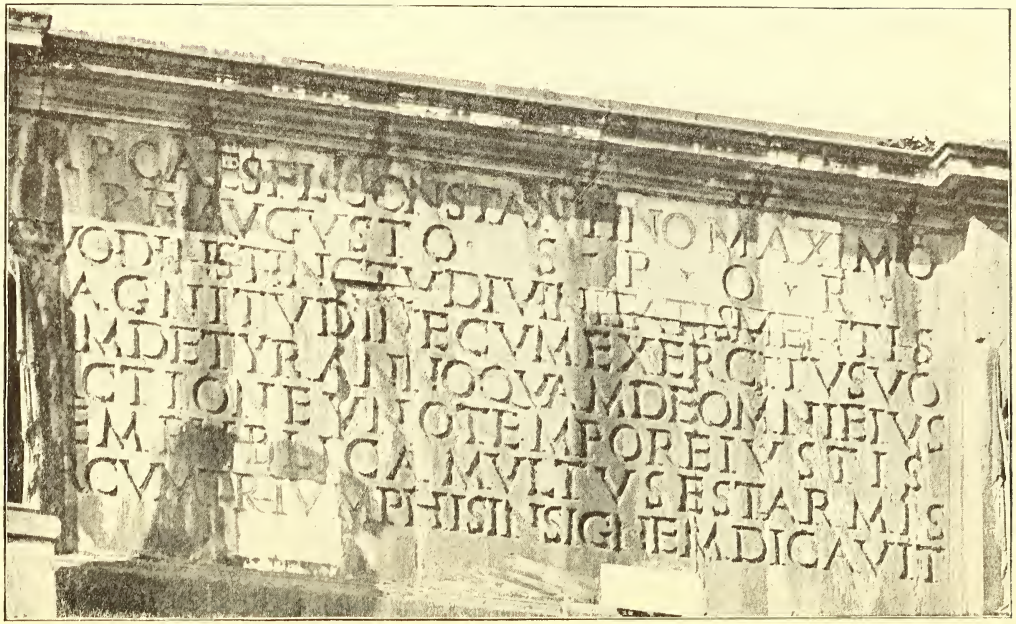
partially atoning for modern shallow cutting, as shadows more directly defining the outlines are thus obtained. The student should, however, be warned at the outset that all



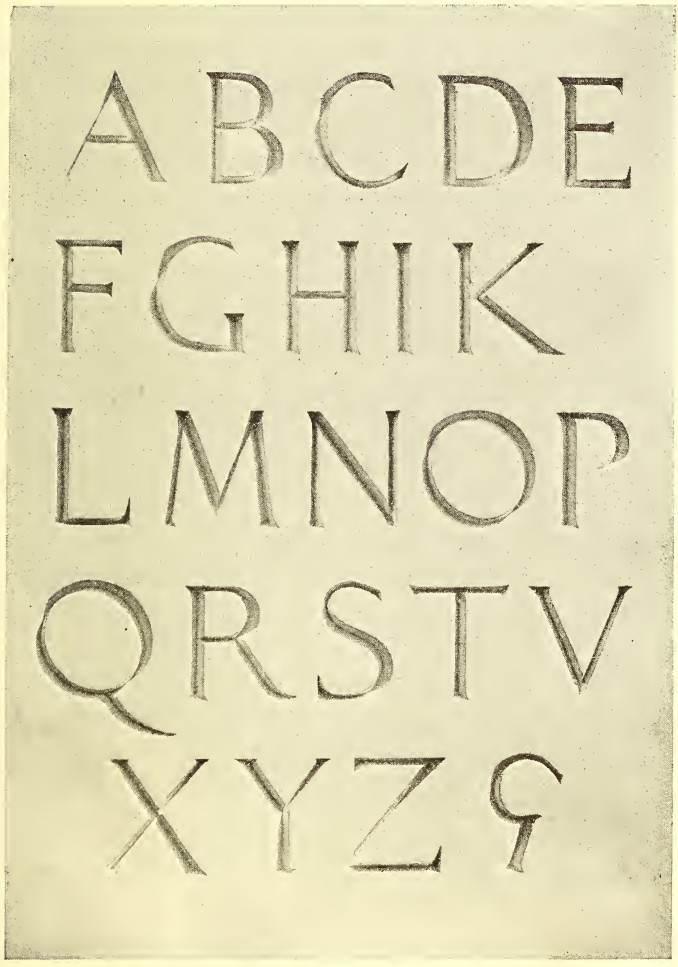
5. PHOTOGRAPH FROM INCISED ROMAN CAPITALS SHOWN IN 4

reproductions or tracings from rubbings of ancient stone-cut letters are apt to be more or less deceptive, as all the accidental variations of the outlines are exaggerated, and where the stone of the original has been chipped or worn away it appears in the reproduction as though the letter had been actually so cut.

The photograph of a panel of lettering from the upper part of the Arch of Constantine, Rome, shown in 6, well indicates the effect of shadows in defining the classic Roman letters; and the effect of shadows on an incised letter may be clearly observed by comparing 4 and 5, the former showing a drawing for an inscription in which the Serlio-Ross



6. INCISED ROMAN CAPITALS ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, ROME



7. MODEL FOR INCISED ROMAN CAPITALS McKIM, MEAD & WHITE

alphabet was used as a basis for the letter forms, and the latter being a photograph of the same inscription, as cut in granite. It will be noted how much narrower the thin

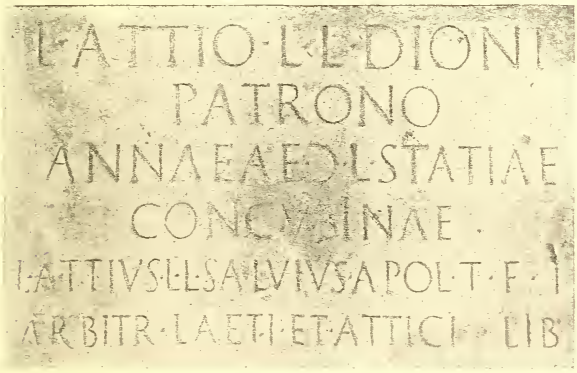


8. ROMAN INCISED CAPITALS FROM A RUBBING

lines appear when defined only by shadow than in the drawing. The model used for the lettering on the frieze of the Boston Public Library, 7, which shows some interesting modern forms intended for cutting in granite, should be studied for the effect of the cast shadows; while 14, a redrawing of inscriptions on the Harvard Architectural Building, Cambridge, Mass., exhibits an excellent type of letter with widened thin lines for v-cutting in sandstone.

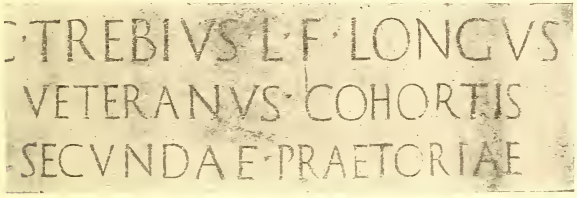
The special requirements of the stone-cut forms for either incised or raised inscriptions are, however, quite apart from the subject of this book, and are too various to be taken up in greater detail here. It is important, nevertheless, that the designer should be reminded always to make allowance for the material in which a letter was originally executed. Otherwise, if exactly copied in other materials, he may find the result annoyingly unsatisfactory.

The examples of letters taken from Roman and Renaissance Italian monuments, shown in the pages of this chapter, will illustrate the variety of individual letter forms



9. ROMAN INCISED INSCRIPTION BOLOGNA

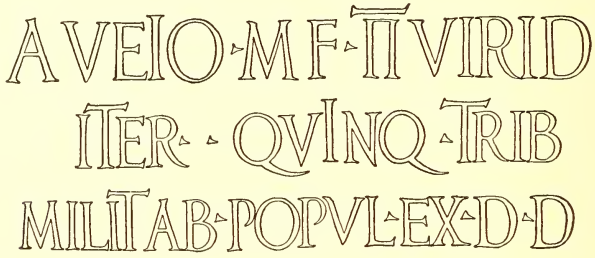
used by the Classic and Renaissance designers. The shape of the same letter will often be found to vary in the same inscription and even in apparently analogous



10. ROMAN INCISED INSCRIPTION BOLOGNA

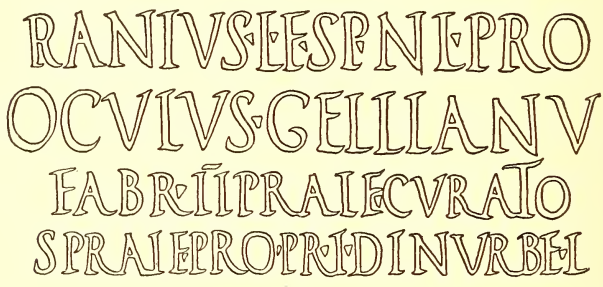
cases. The designers evidently had in mind more than the directly adjacent words, and sometimes even considered

the relation of their lettering to objects outside the panel altogether. This is especially true in the work of the Italian Renaissance, which is almost invariably admirable in both composition and arrangement.



11. DETAIL FROM A ROMAN INCISED INSCRIPTION F.C.B.

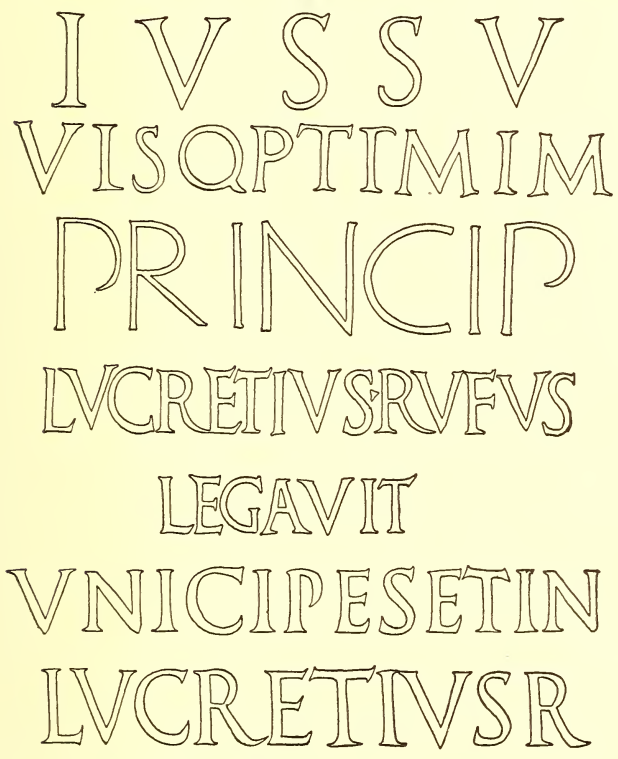
Figures 8 to 22 show examples, drawn from various sources, which exhibit different treatments of the classic Roman letter forms. The differentiation will be found to



12. ROMAN CAPITALS OF PEN FORMS CUT IN STONE F.C.B.

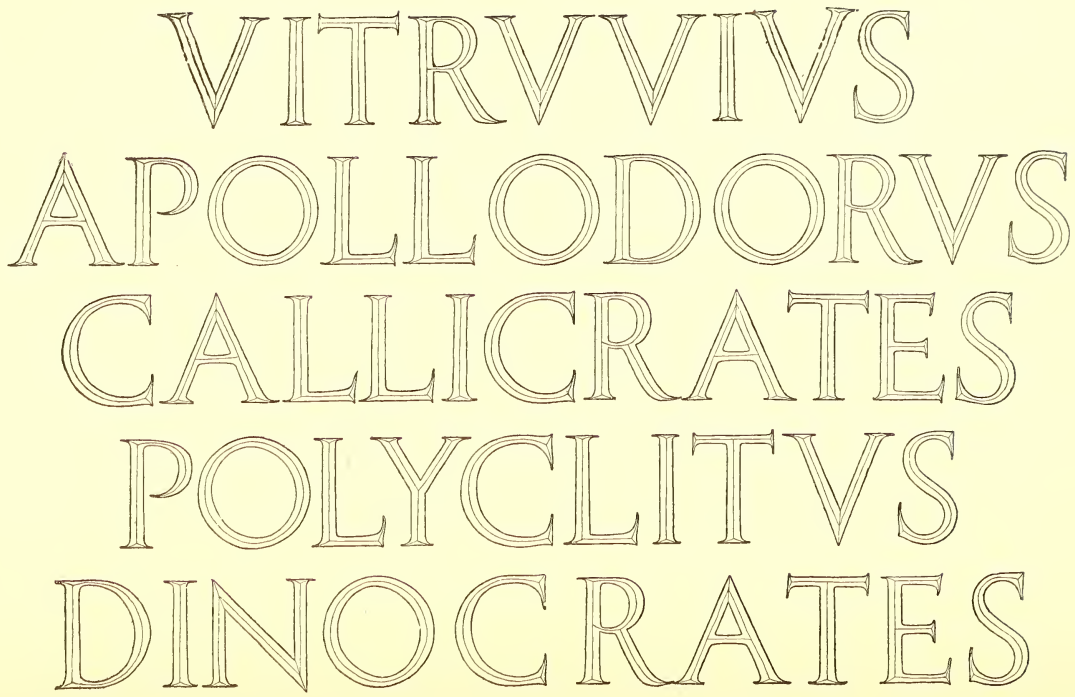
lie largely in the widths of the letters themselves, and in the treatment of the serifs, angles, and varying widths of line. Figures 11 to 13 and 16 to 22 are redrawn from rubbings

of Roman incised inscriptions. Figures 16 and 17 show beautifully proportioned letters cut in marble with unusual care and refinement, considering the large size of the originals. A later Roman form of less refinement but of greater

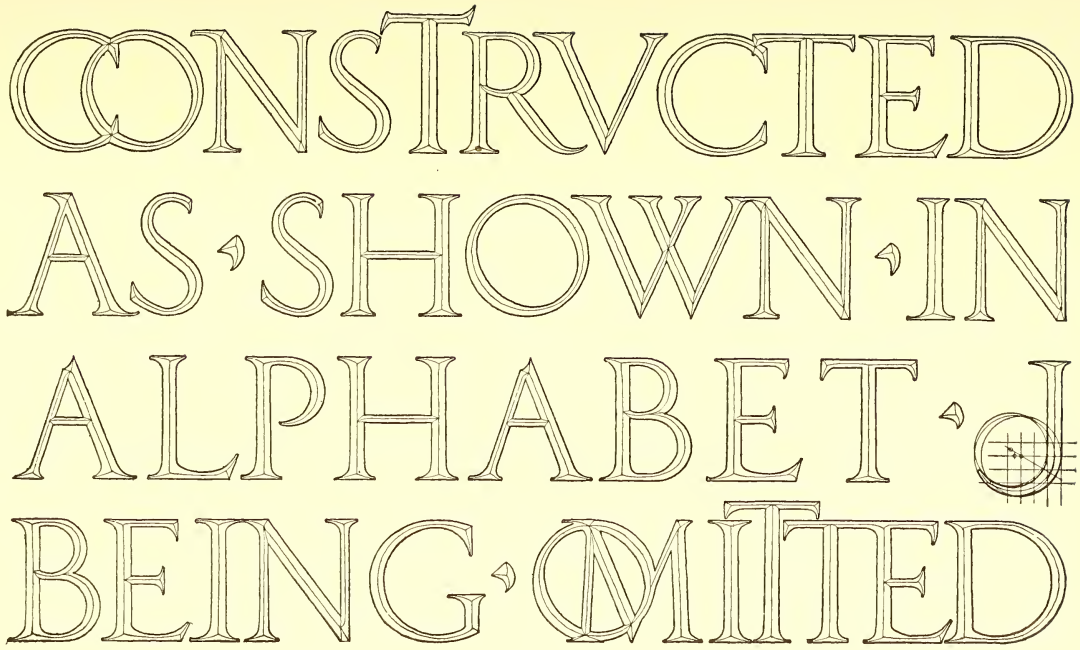


13. ROMAN CAPITALS FROM INSCRIPTIONS FROM RUBBINGS. F.C.B.

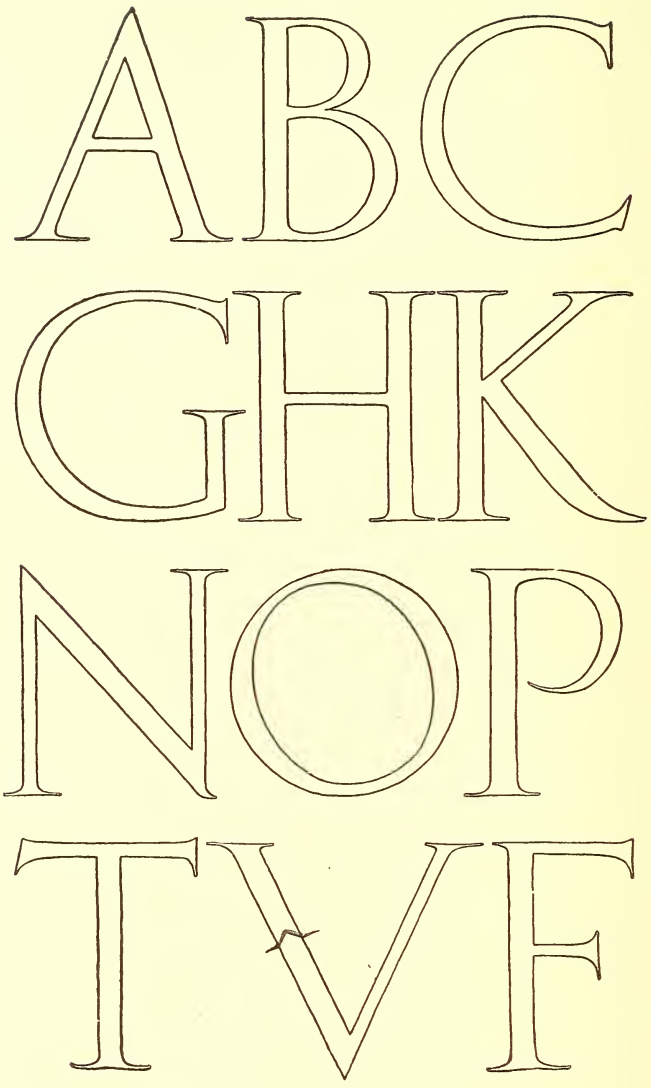
strength and carrying power, and for that reason better adapted to many modern uses, is shown in 18 and 19. In this case the original letters were cut about seven and



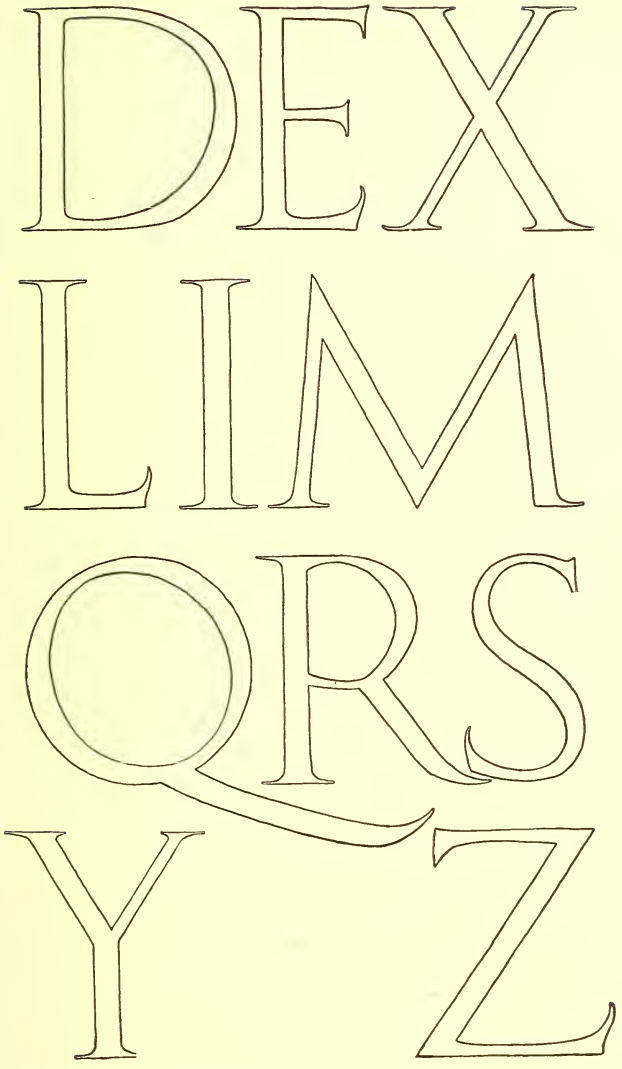
14. MODERN INCISED ROMAN CAPITALS IN SANDSTONE ARCHITECTURAL BUILDING, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



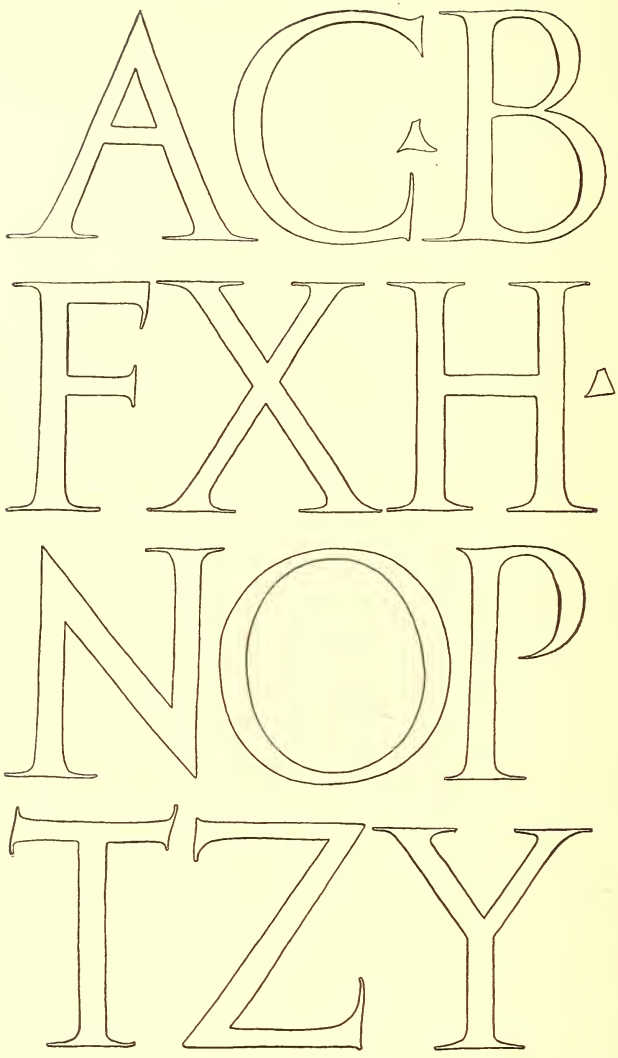
15. LETTERS SHOWN IN ALPHABET 1-2, IN COMPOSITION ALBERT R. ROSS



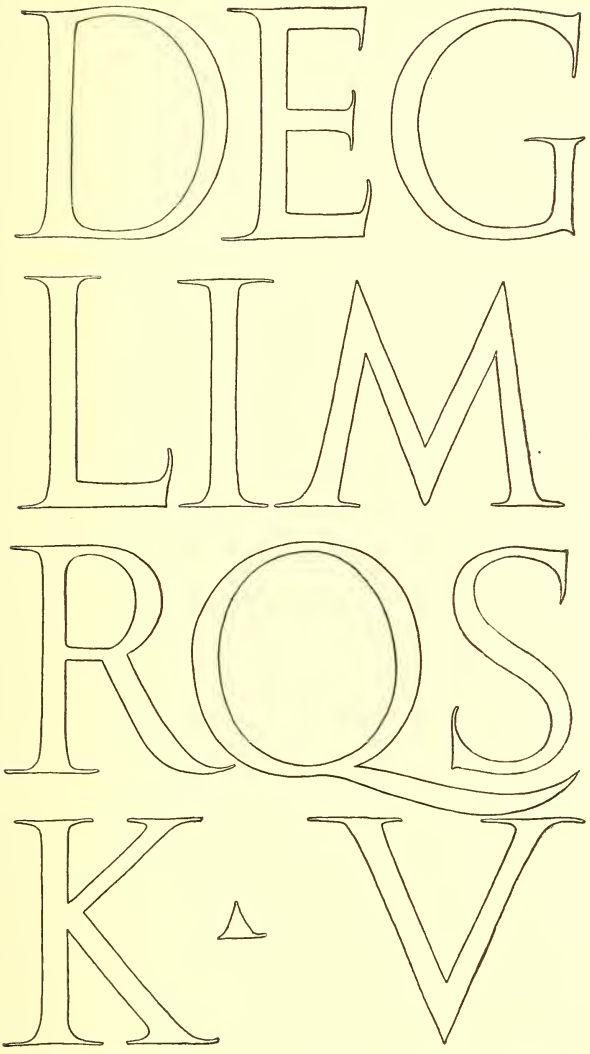
16. CLASSIC CAPITALS CUT IN MARBLE ROMAN FORUM. F.C.B.



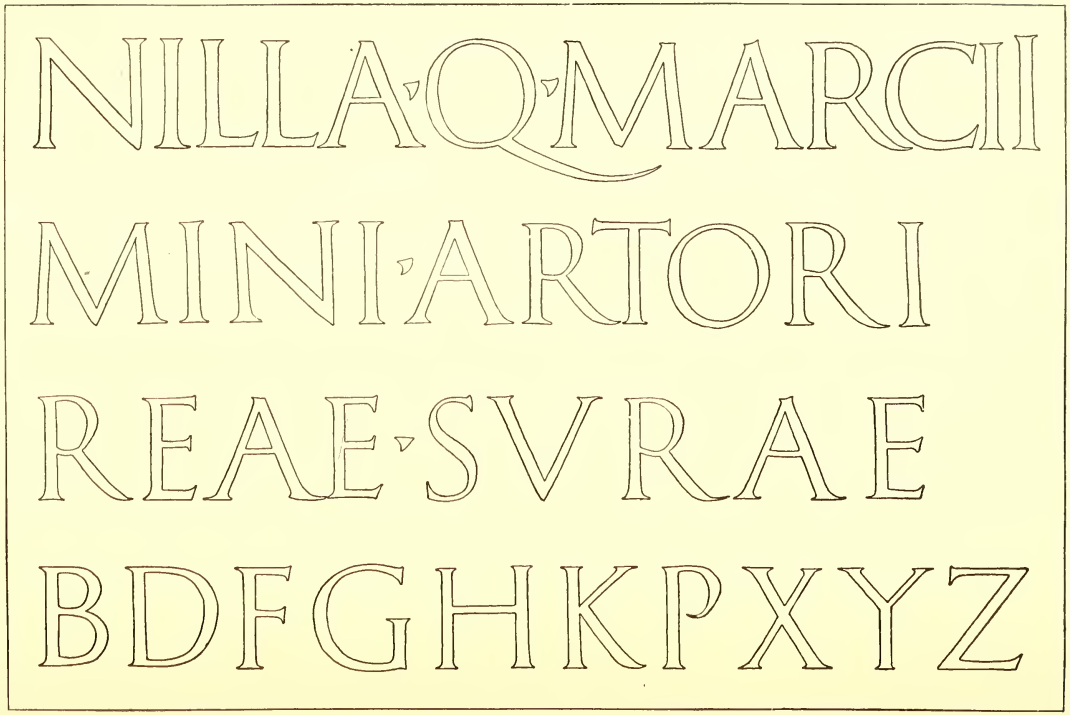
17. CLASSIC CAPITALS CUT IN MARBLE ROMAN FORUM. F. C. B.



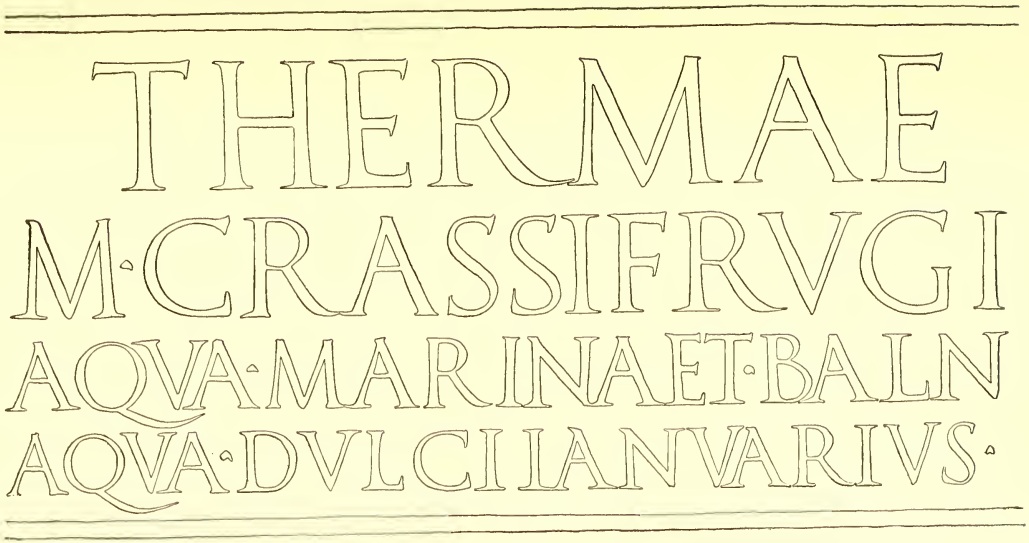
18. CLASSIC CAPITALS CUT IN MARBLE FROM RUBBINGS. F.C.B.



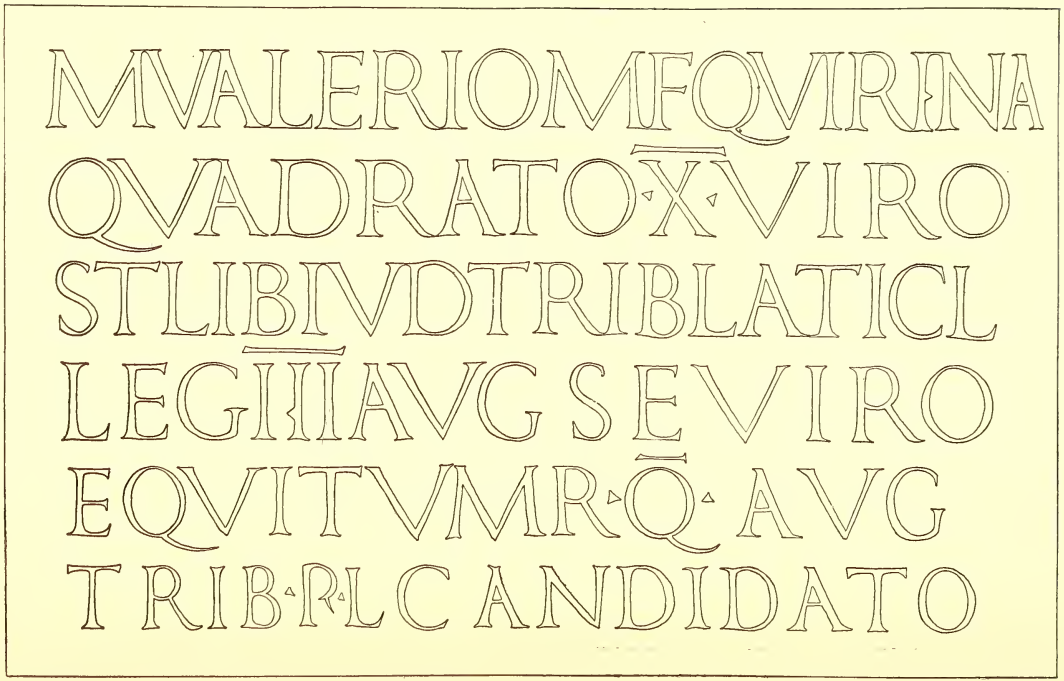
19. CLASSIC CAPITALS CUT IN MARBLE FROM RUBBINGS. F.C.B.



20. PORTION OF ROMAN INSCRIPTION WITH SUPPLIED LETTERS F. C. B.



21. CLASSIC ROMAN INSCRIPTION IN MARBLE FROM A RUBBING. F. C. B.



22. CLASSIC ROMAN INSCRIPTION IN STONE FROM A RUBBING. F. C. B.

one-half inches high. The letters in 20 are curiously modern in character. Part of the panel of Roman lettering shown in 21 exhibits the use of a form very like that shown in 18 and 19. Figure 11 shows a detail composed in a quite representative fashion; while on the other hand figure 12 depicts a Roman letter of quite unusual character, and of a form evidently adapted from pen work, in which the shapes are narrow and crowded, while the lines are thickened as though they were of the classical square outline. The bits of old Roman inscriptions shown in 8 to 10 and in 13 are included to exhibit various different forms and treatments of classic capitals.

After the fall of Rome and during the Dark Ages the practice of lettering, at least in so far as the Roman form was concerned, was distinctly retrograde. With the advent of the Renaissance, however, the purest classic forms were revived; and indeed the Italian Renaissance seems to have been the golden age of lettering. With the old Roman fragments of the best period constantly before their eyes the Renaissance artists of Italy seem to have grasped the true spirit of classicism; and their work somehow acquired a refinement and delicacy lacking in even the best of the Roman examples. As much of the Italian Renaissance lettering was intended for use on tombs or monuments where it might be seen at close range, and was cut in fine marble, the increased refinement may be due, at least in part, to different conditions.

The panel from Raphael's tomb in the Pantheon, Rome, 30, shows a beautiful and pure form of typical Renaissance letter; and the composition of the panel is as well worthy

of careful study as are the letter forms. Figure 34, devised from a tomb in Santa Croce, portrays a letter not only beautiful in itself, but one which, with two minor changes (for the top bar of the T might advantageously be shortened



23. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE INSCRIPTION IN MARBLE

to allow its neighbors to set closer, and the M might be finished at the top with a serif, after the usual fashion), is exactly applicable to the purposes of the modern draughtsman. This type of letter appears to best advantage when used in such panel forms as those shown in the rubbing from the Marsuppini tomb, 31, and in the floor slab from the same church, 32. Two very refined examples, 28 and 29, also from slabs in Santa Croce, Florence, date from about the same period. The latter exhibits the alphabet itself, and the former shows a similar letter form as actually used. The letters in 33, redrawn from rubbings from the Marsuppini tomb, are shown for comparison with the rubbing itself, which is reproduced in smaller size in 31. Taken together, plates 30, 31 and 32 will fairly represent not only the usual fashion of composing Renaissance panels, but capital forms which illustrate some of the most excellent work of this period.

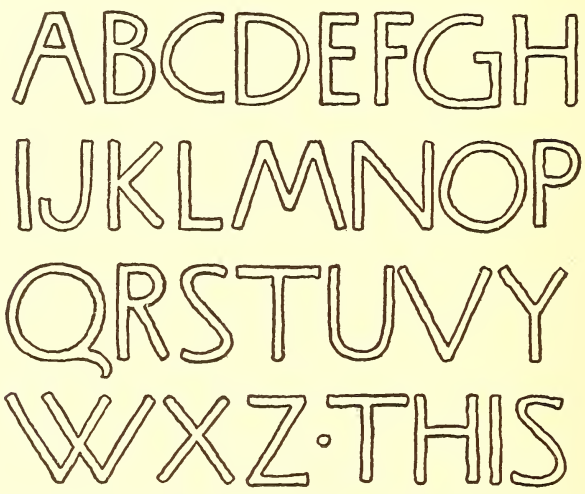


24. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE MEDAL PISANO



25. MODERN FRENCH MEDAL O. ROTY

A very different and interesting type of letter was used on many of the best medals of the Italian Renaissance (see 24), which has been recently adapted and employed by modern medal designers in France, as exhibited in figure 25. Although absolutely plain, it is, when properly composed, much more effective in the service for which it was intended



26. CAPITALS ADAPTED FROM RENAISSANCE MEDALS F.C.B.

than a more elaborate and fussy form; and although sometimes adapted with good results to other uses, it is particularly appropriate for casting in metal. Similar forms rendered in pen and ink are shown in 26.

Figures 27, and 35 to 41 show various pen or printed forms of capital letters redrawn from the handiwork of Renaissance masters. The capital letters shown in 27 are unusually beautiful, and their purity of form is well dis-

played in the outline treatment. Perhaps the best known standard example of a Renaissance pen-drawn letter is that by Tagliente, reproduced in 35 and 36. In spite of their familiarity it has seemed impossible to omit the set of capi-



27. SPANISH RENAISSANCE ALPHABET JUAN DE YCIAR, 1550

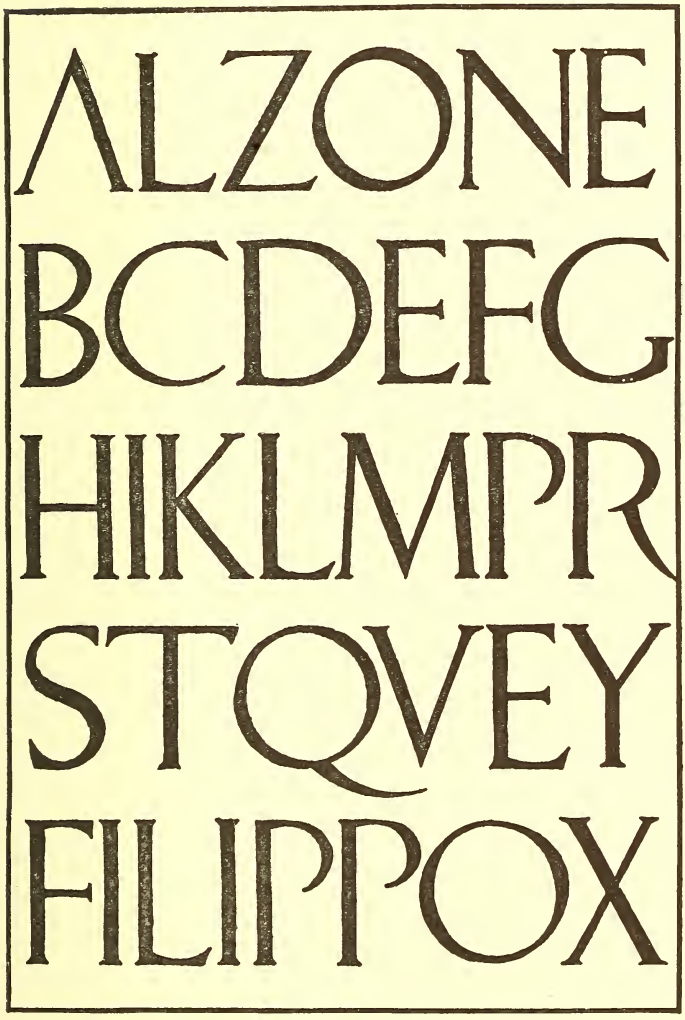
tals, with variants, by Albrecht Dürer, 37 and 38; for Dürer's letters were taken as a basis by nearly all such Renaissance designers of lettering as Geoffrey Tory, Leonardo da Vinci, etc. It should be observed in the Dürer

alphabet that among the variant forms of individual letters shown, one is usually intended for monumental use, while another exhibits pen treatment in the characteristic swelling of the round letters etc.

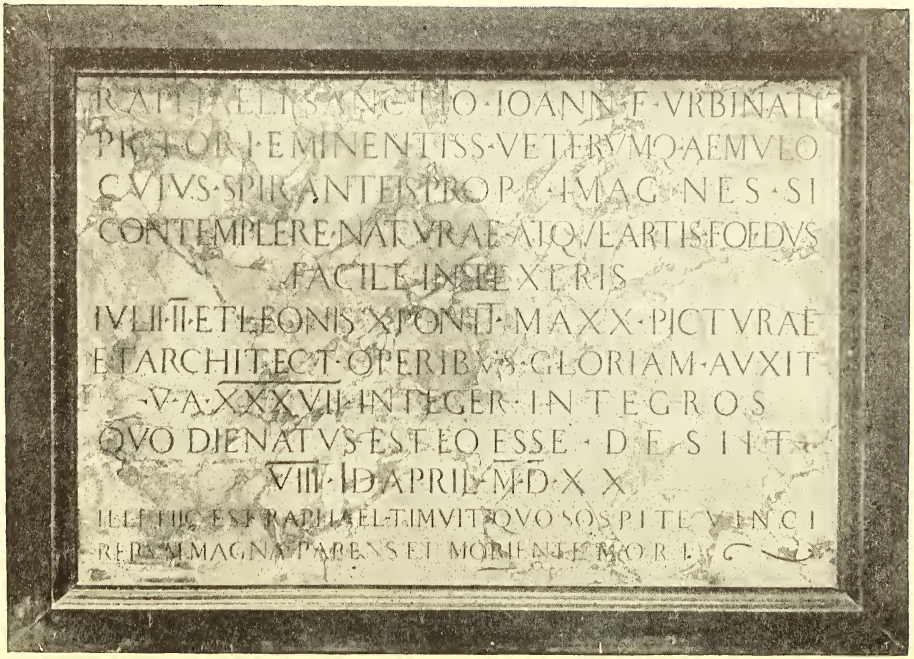


28. RENAISSANCE INLAID MEDALLION FROM A RUBBING. F.C.B.

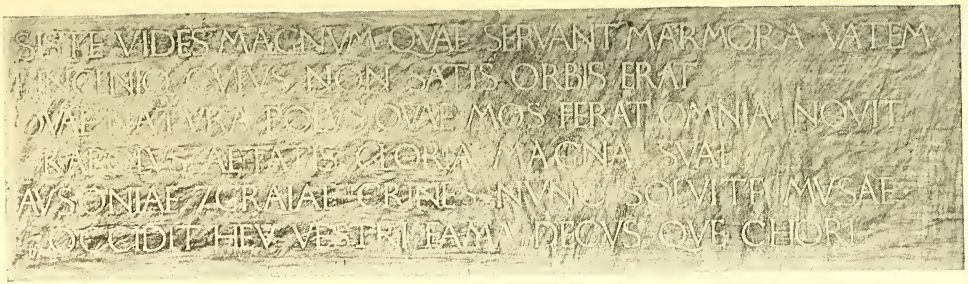
Serlio's alphabet, 39 and 40, should be compared with Mr. Ross's modification of it, reproduced in 1 and 2. The alphabet shown in 41 is a somewhat expanded form of classic capital, contrasting markedly in various respects with more typical forms.



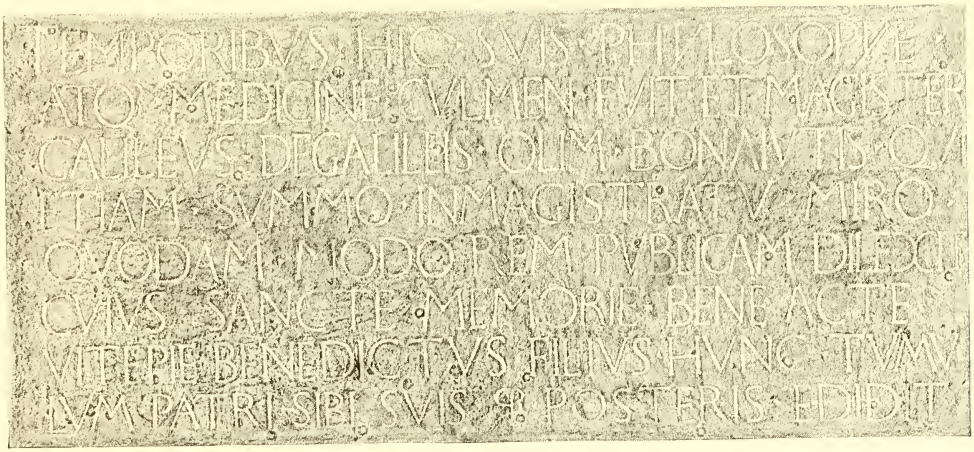
29. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS SANTA CROCE. F. C. B.



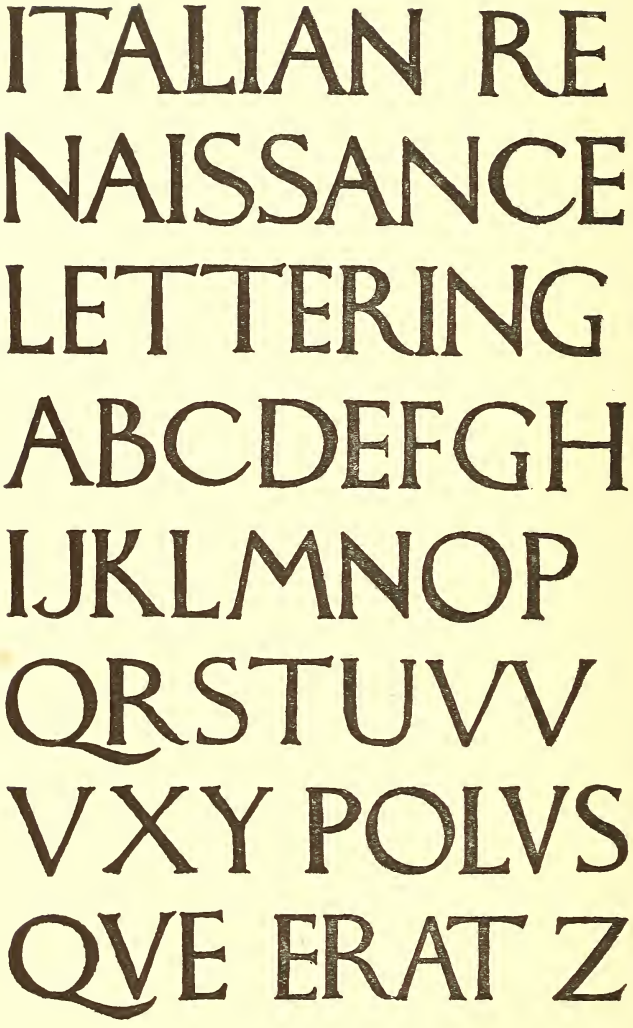
30. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE PANEL FROM RAPHAEL'S TOMB PANTHEON, ROME



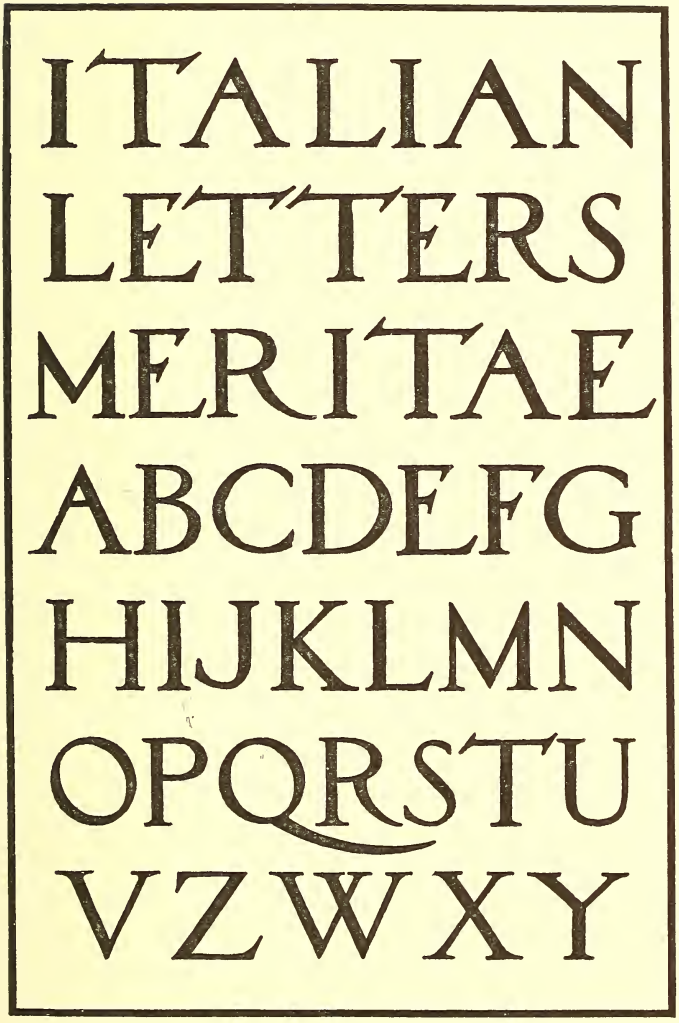
31. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE INSCRIPTION — MARSUPPINI TOMB, FLORENCE



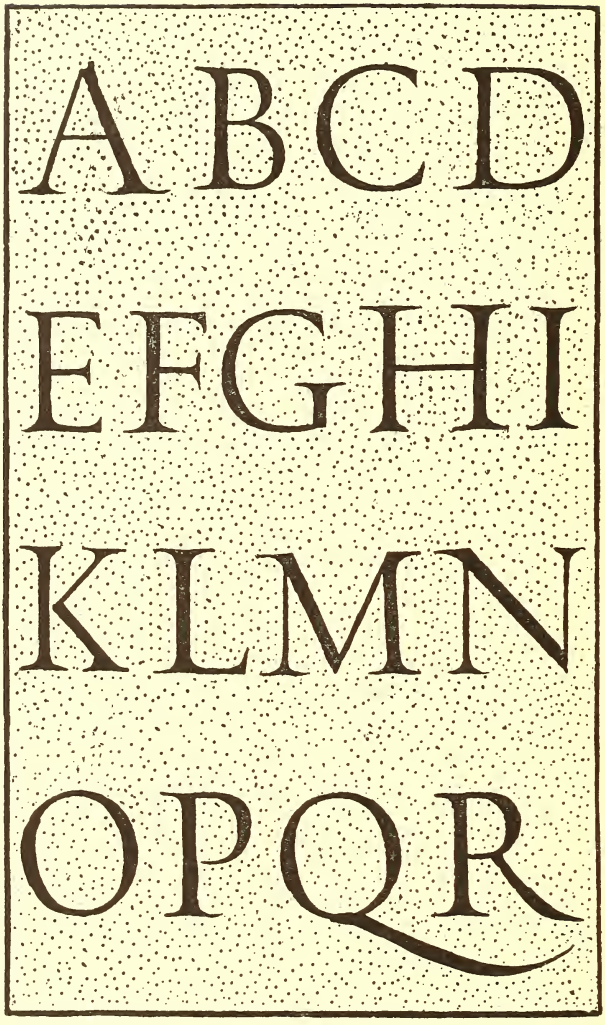
32. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE INSCRIPTION — FLOOR SLAB IN SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE



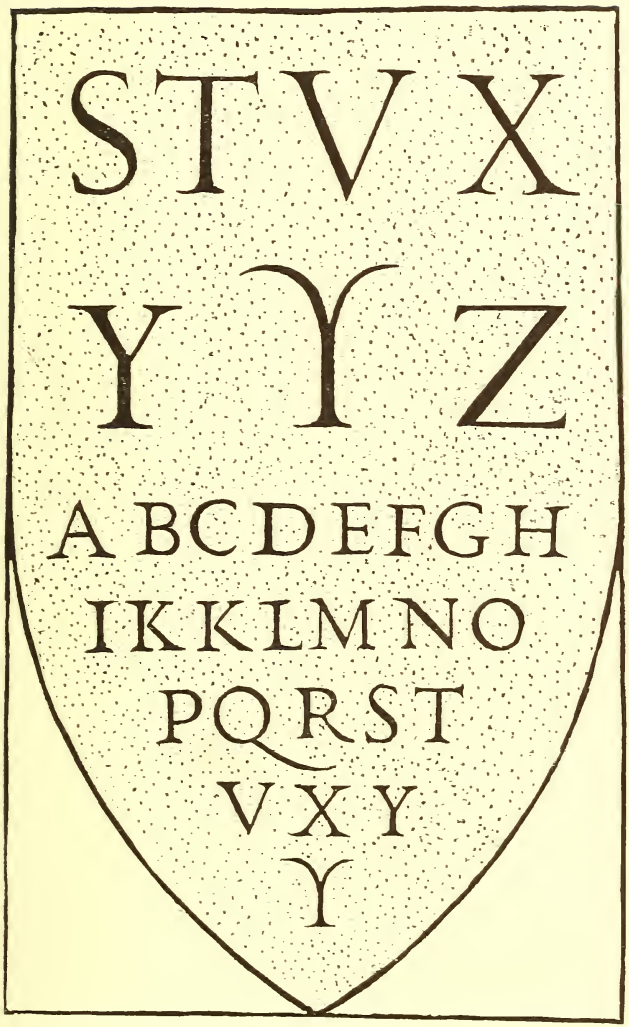
33. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS MARSUPPINI TOMB. F.C.B.



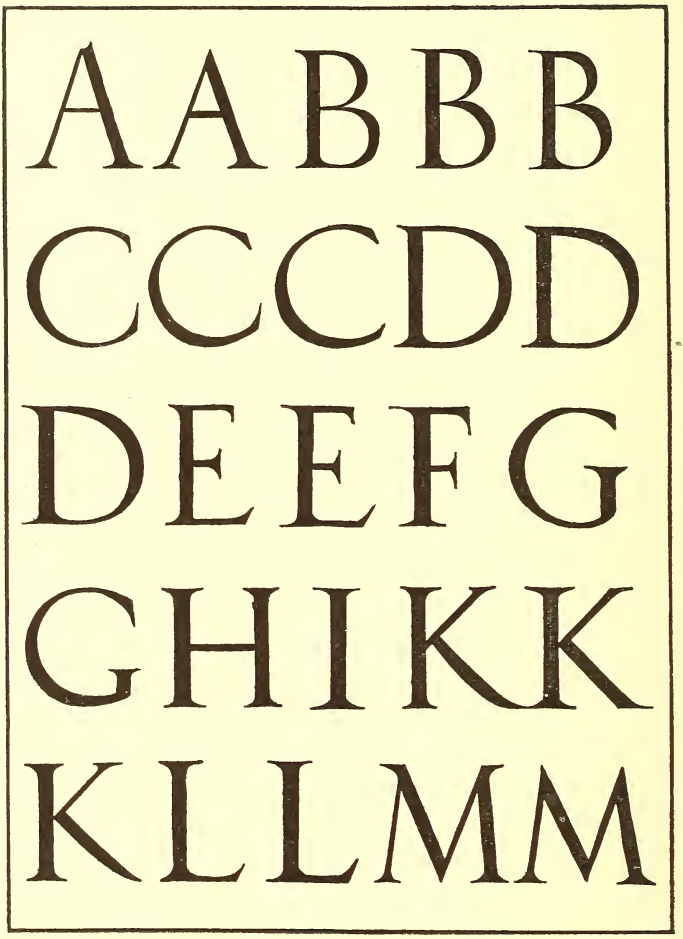
34. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS FROM RUBBINGS. F.C.B.



35. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS G. A. TAGLIENTE, 1524



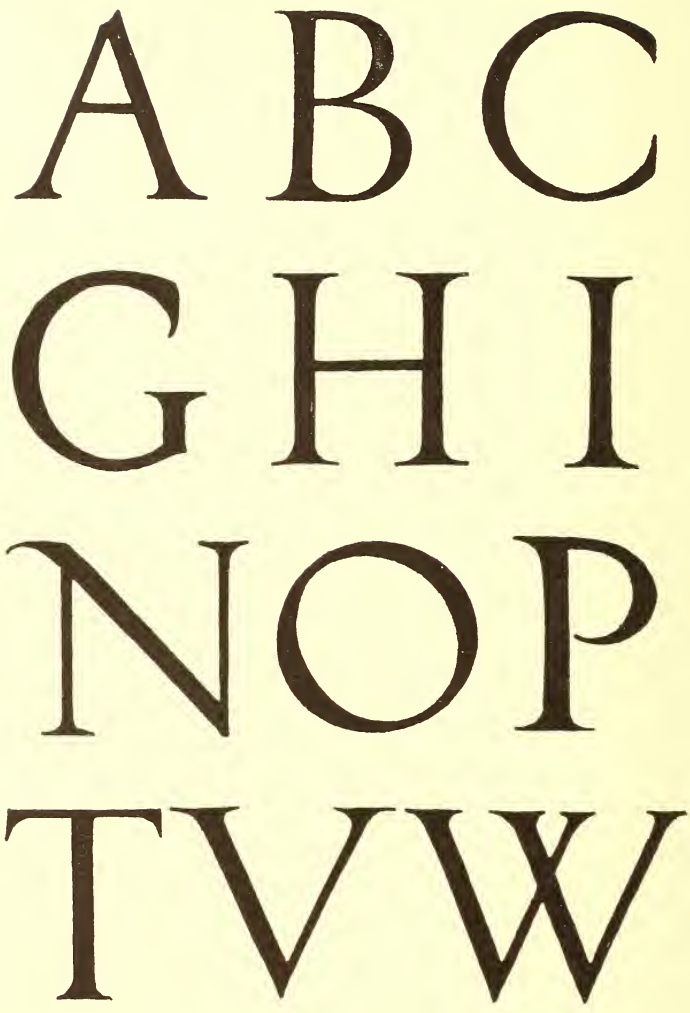
36. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS G. A. TAGLIENTE, 1524



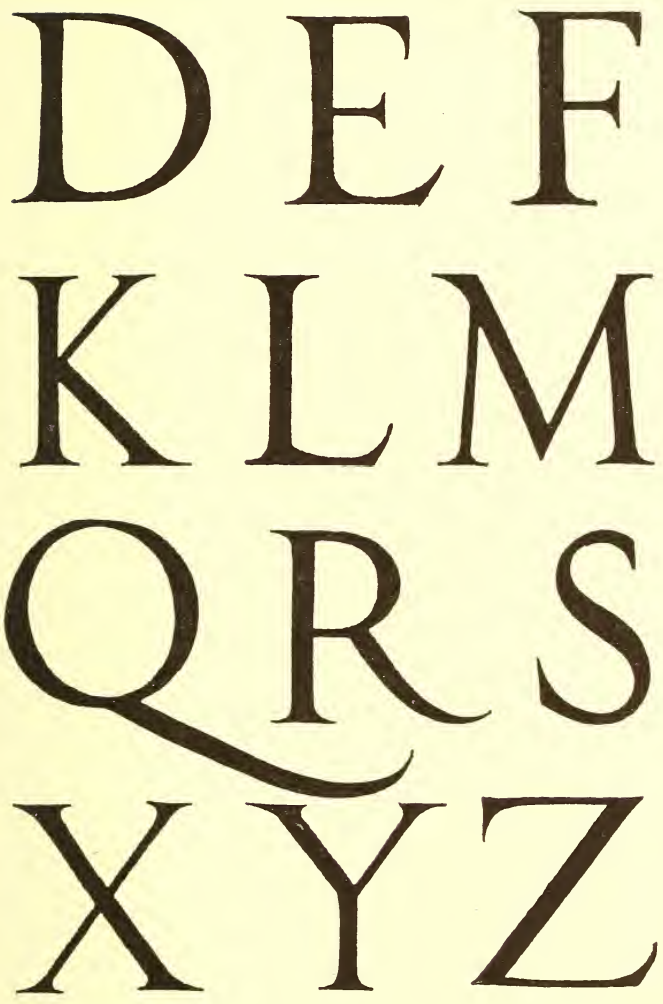
37. GERMAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1525



38. GERMAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1525



39. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS SERLIO, 16th CENTURY



40. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS SERLIO, 16th CENTURY



41. GERMAN RENAISSANCE CAPITALS URBAIN WŸSS, 16th CENTURY

A practically unlimited number of other examples might have been included to show various capital forms of Renaissance letters; but the specimens chosen will adequately illustrate all the more distinctive and refined types of the individual letters.

Before, during and after the Renaissance movement many local and extraneous influences temporarily modified the forms of the Roman letters. There are, for instance, numerous examples of lettering in which Byzantine and Romanesque traits are strongly apparent, such as the free manipulation of the letter forms in order to make them fit into given lines and spaces. The drawing of the panel over the doorway of the Badia, Florence, 42, notable for the characteristic placing and composition of the letters, will serve as a case in point. This example is further interesting because it shows how the Uncial form of the letter was beginning to react and find a use in stone — a state of affairs which at



42. ITALIAN RENAISSANCE PANEL, FLORENCE C. F. BRAGDON

first glance might seem anomalous, for the Uncial letter was distinctly a pen-drawn form; but it was discovered that its rounder forms made it particularly useful for inscribing stones which were likely to chip or sliver, in carving which it was consequently desirable to avoid too acute angles. The Roman letter underwent various salient modifications

at the hands of the scribes of extra-Italian nations. We find very crude variants of the Roman letter, dating hundreds of years after the Roman form had reached its highest



43. MODERN TITLE (Compare 46) B. G. GOODHUE

development; and, on the other hand, some very beautiful and individual national variants were produced. The continual interchange of manuscripts among the nations on the continent of Europe probably explains the more conventional character and strong general resemblance of most of the early Continental work; but the scribes of insular England, less influenced by contemporary progress and examples, produced forms of greater individuality (see 46, 47,



44. MODERN TITLE (Compare 49) WALTER CRANE

48). In Ireland, letter forms originally derived from early Roman models were developed through many decades with no ulterior influences, and resulted in some wonderfully distinctive and beautiful variations of the Roman letters,

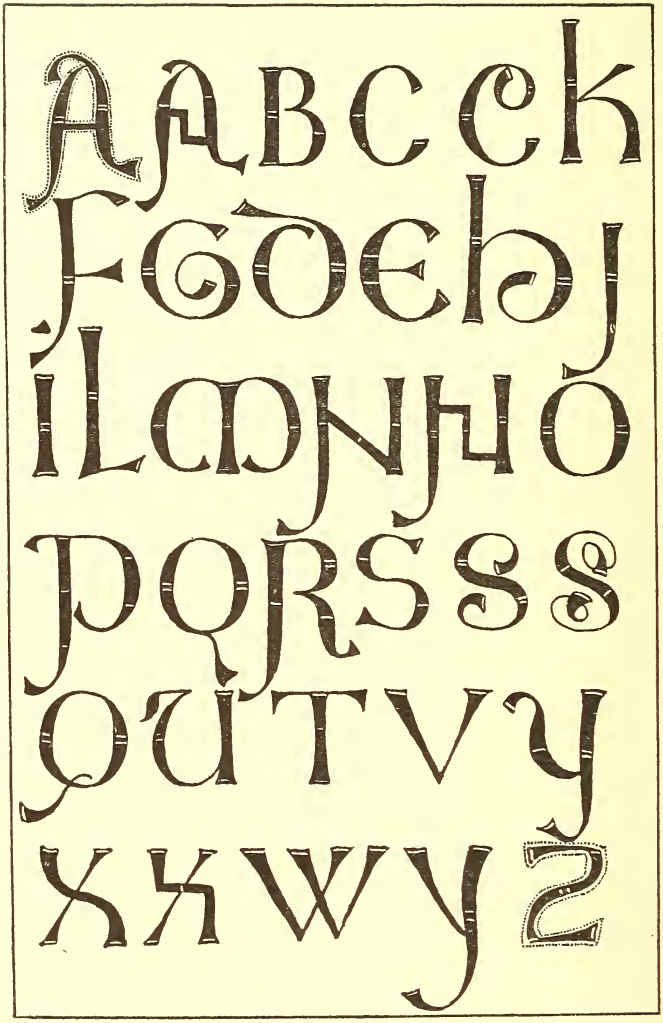
though the beauty of these Irish examples can only be faintly suggested by reproductions limited to black and white, and without the decorations of the originals.

Figures 43 and 44 illustrate, respectively, modern employments of such strongly characteristic letters as those shown

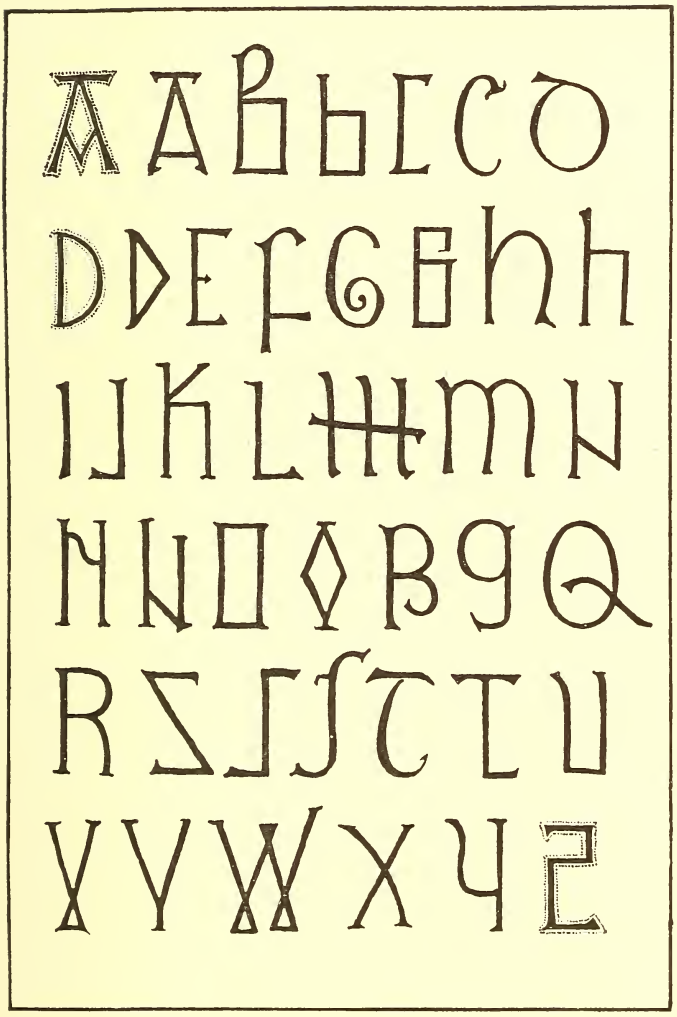


45. TITLE IN EARLY ENGLISH CAPITALS W. E. NESFIELD

in 46 and 49. From these ancient examples the designers have evolved letters suitable to the character of their work. In 44 Mr. Crane has engrafted upon a form quite personal to himself a characteristic detail of treatment borrowed from the letter shown in 49. Figure 45 shows a similar and modernized employment of a standard form of Uncial capital.



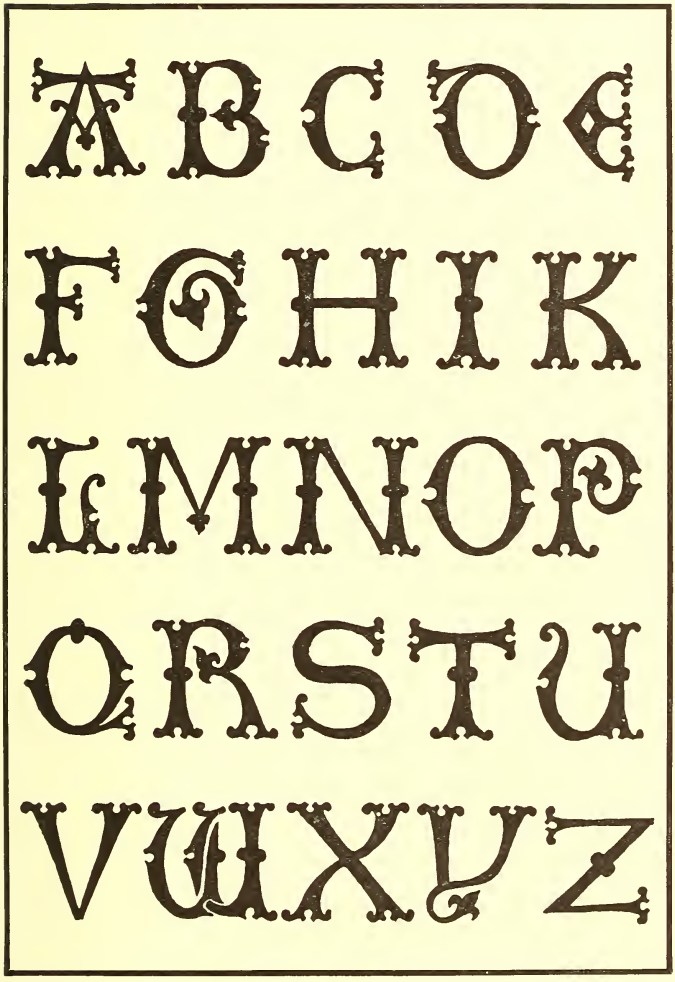
46. ANGLO-SAXON CAPITALS 6th CENTURY



47. ANGLO-SAXON CAPITALS 7th CENTURY



48. ANGLO-SAXON CAPITALS EARLY 10th CENTURY



49. EARLY ENGLISH CAPITALS 16th CENTURY

CHAPTER II

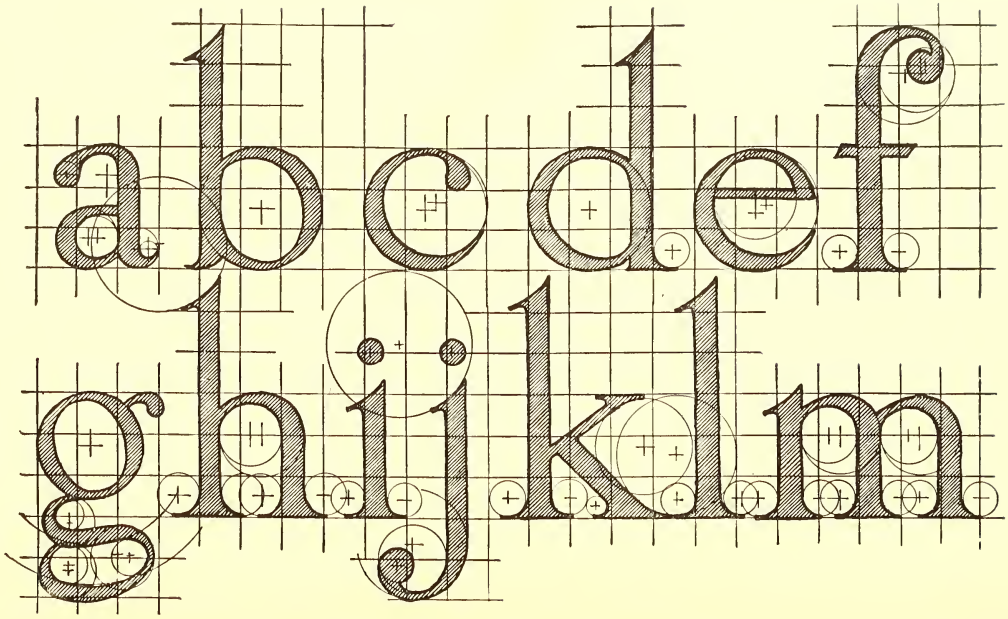
MODERN ROMAN LETTERS

The small or "minuscule" letter that we now use in all printed books attained its modern and definitive form only after the invention of printing. The first printed books were made to imitate, as closely as possible, the hand-written work of the scribes of the early fifteenth century, and as printing was first done in Germany, the earliest book types were those modeled upon German scripts, somewhat similar to that shown in 141, and their condensed or blackletter variants. The Italian printers, of a more classical taste, found the German types somewhat black and clumsy; for though Gothic characters were also used in Italy, they had become lighter and more refined there. The Italians, therefore, evolved a new form of type letter, based upon the *Italian* pen letters then in use, which though fundamentally Gothic in form had been refined by amalgamation with an earlier letter known as the "Caroline," from its origin under the direction of Charlemagne. The "Caroline" was in its turn an imitation of the Roman "Half-uncial." The close relationship of the first small type letter forms in Italy with the current writing hand of the best Italian scribes is well indicated by the legend that the "Italic," or sloped small letter, was taken directly from the handwriting of Petrarch. The new Italian types, in which classic capitals were combined with the newly evolved minuscule

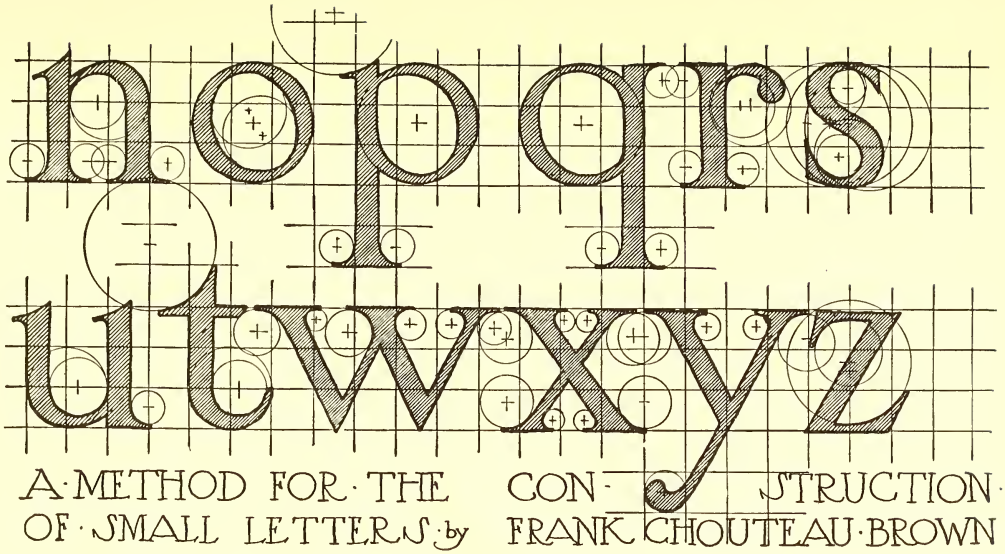
letters, were called "Roman" from the city of their origin, and sprang into almost immediate popularity, spreading from Italy into England, France and Spain. In Germany, on the other hand, the national blackletter form persisted, and is still in use to-day.

The minuscule "Roman" letters thus evolved were developed to their most perfect individual forms by the master-printers of Venice; and it is to the models which they produced that we must revert to-day when we attempt to devise or reproduce an elegant small letter of any conservative form. The modern pen draughtsman should bear in mind, however, that, perfect as such forms of letters may be for the uses of the printer, the limitations of type have necessarily curtailed the freedom and variety of their serif and swash lines, and that therefore, though accepting their basic forms, he need not be cramped by their restrictions, nor imitate the unalterable and sometimes awkwardly inartistic relations of letter to letter for which he finds precedents in the printed page. Indeed, the same general rules for spacing and the same freedom in the treatment of the serifs, kerns and swash lines are quite as applicable to pen-drawn small letters as to the capital forms. The only true path of progress lies in this freedom of treatment; and if the same fertile artists of the Renaissance who have bequeathed to us such beautiful examples of their unfettered use of the capital had used the minuscule also, we should undoubtedly possess small letters of far more graceful and adaptable forms than those which we now have.

In 50 and 51 may be found an attempt to formulate a scheme to assist in the reconstruction of an alphabet of Roman small letters, after somewhat the same fashion as



50. SCHEME FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN SMALL LETTERS F. C. B.



51. SCHEME FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN SMALL LETTERS F. C. B.

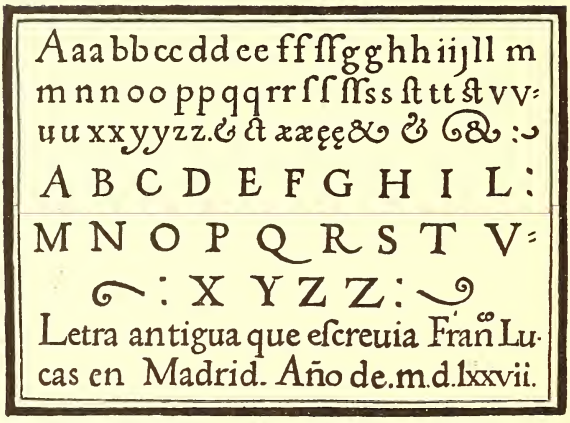
that devised for the Roman capitals by Mr. Ross, in 1 and 2. A small-letter diagram must, for obvious reasons, be less exact and detailed than one for the more defined capital form; but the diagram given will serve to determine sufficiently the main outlines and proportions. In their shapes the letters shown in 50 and 51 adhere fairly closely to the best type forms of the small letter; and the drawing will serve, further, to show the space generally allowed by modern founders between one lower-case letter and another when set into type words. This spacing is based on the m of the fount employed. The open space between all but k, w and y (in which the outlines of the letters themselves hold them further away from their neighbors) and the round letters being the space between the upright strokes of the m; an interval represented in the diagram by a square and a half. The round letters, as has already been said in speaking of the capital forms, should be spaced nearer together; and it will be observed that they are only separated by one square in the diagram. Although suggestive, the rules which govern the spacing of types are not to be blindly followed by the pen letterer. In type, for instance, it would be impossible, for mechanical reasons, to allow the kerns of the f, j and y to project far over the body of the next letter, and in these letters the kerns consequently have either to be restrained or the letters spaced farther apart. In pen lettering, however, the designer is not restrained by such limitations, and his spacing of letters should be governed solely by the effect.

The disposition of the accented lines in the small letters follow the same general rules that govern those of the capitals (see page 2); the only deviation being in the case of

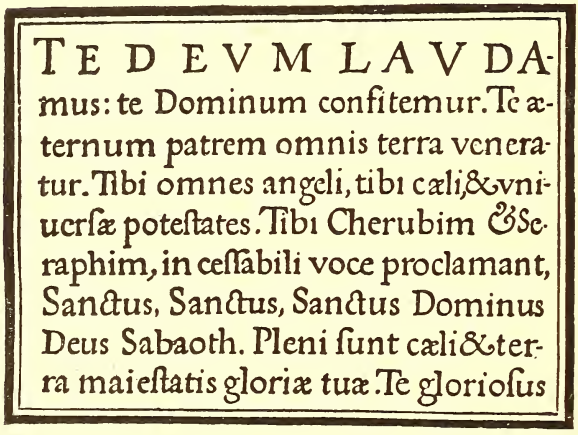
the g, in which the shading of the bottom seems to have been determined largely by the effect upon the eye.

It will be noticed in the diagram that the "ascenders" of the smaller letters rise about three squares to their extreme top points above the body of the letter; that the body of each letter is inclosed in a square that is three units high, and that the "descenders" fall but two squares below the letter body. These proportions are not by any means invariable, however, and indeed there is no fixed rule by which the proportions of ascenders and descenders to the body of the Roman minuscule may be determined. In some forms of the letter both are of the same length, and sometimes that length is the same as the body height of the letter. In general a better result is obtained by making both ascenders and descenders of less than the length of the body, and keeping the descenders shorter than the ascenders in about the proportion of two-fifths to three-fifths.

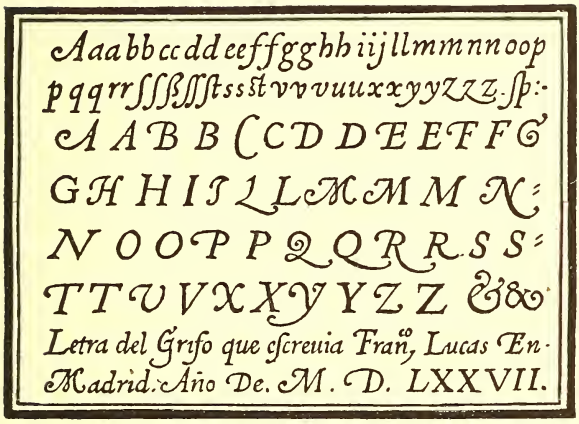
Parallel lines of small letters cannot be spaced closer to each other than the ascenders and descenders will allow; the projections above and below the line are awkward, and interrupt the definite lines of demarkation at the top and bottom of the letter-bodies; the capitals necessarily used in connection with the small letters add to the irregularity of the line—all of which reasons combine to limit the employment of minuscule for formal or monumental uses. On the other hand, the small letter form is excellently adapted for the printed page, where the occasional capitals but tend to break the monotony, while the ascenders and descenders strongly characterize and increase the legibility of the letter forms.



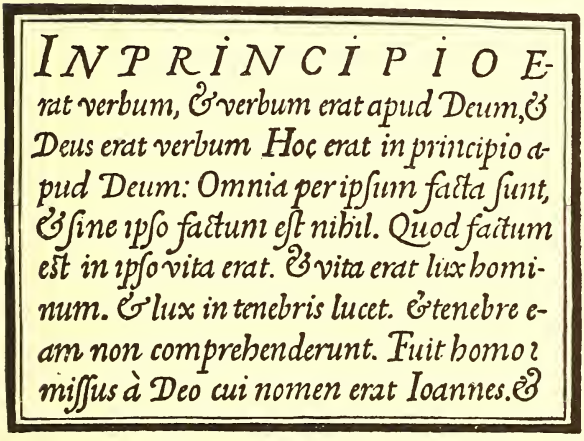
52. SPANISH ROMAN LETTERS PEN DRAWN
FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577



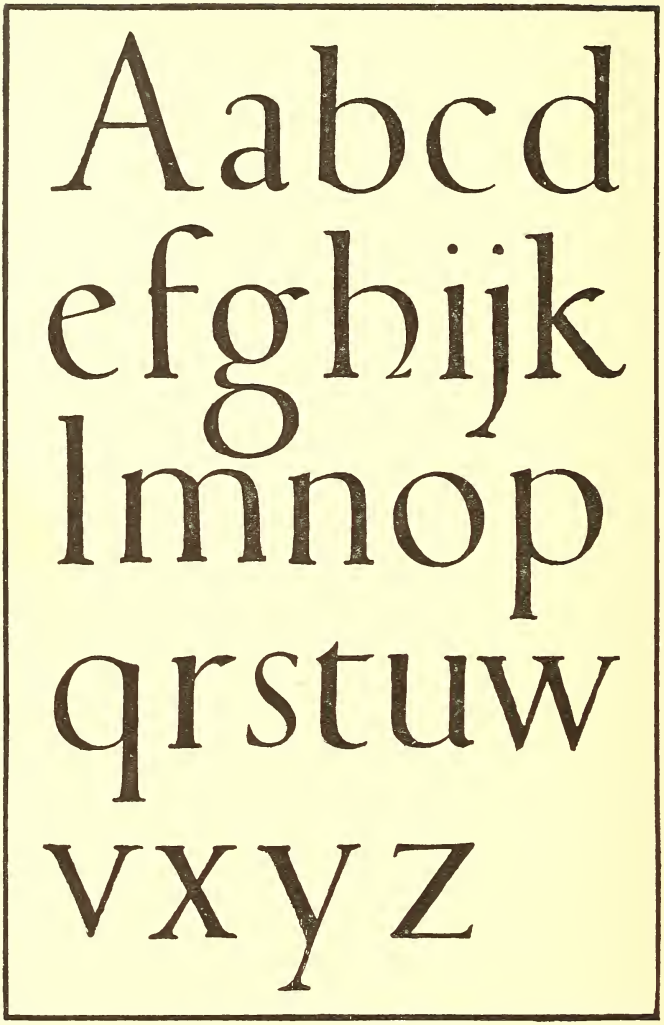
53. SPANISH ROMAN LETTERS PEN DRAWN
FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577


Aaabbccddeeffgghhiijllmmnnoop
pqqrrſſßſſtsskvvvuuxxyyzzz.ſp:·
AABBCCDDEEFFG
GHHIIJLLMMMN:
NOOPPQQRRSS:
TTUVXXYYZZ &&
Letra del Griſo que eſcreuia Fran^co Lucas En·
Madrid. Año De. M. D. LXXVII.

54. SPANISH ITALIC LETTERS PEN DRAWN
FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577


INPRINCIPIOE-
rat verbum, & verbum erat apud Deum, &
Deus erat verbum Hoc erat in principio a-
pud Deum: Omnia per ipſum facta ſunt,
& ſine ipſo factum eſt nihil. Quod factum
eſt in ipſo vita erat. & vita erat lux homi-
num. & lux in tenebris lucet. & tenebre e-
am non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo
miſſus à Deo cui nomen erat Ioannes. &

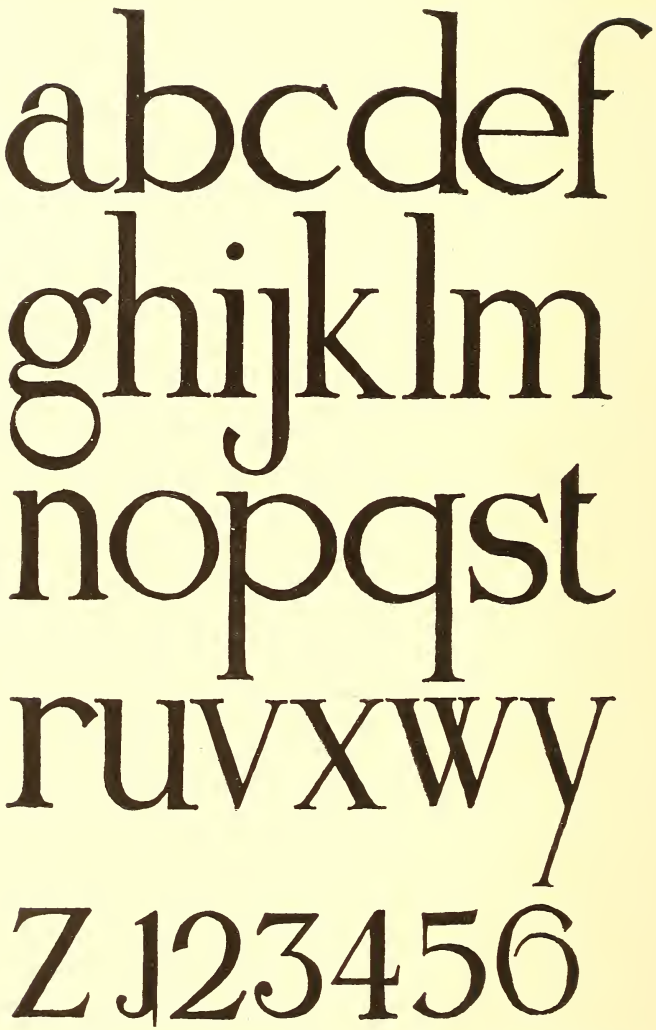
55. SPANISH ITALIC LETTERS PEN DRAWN
FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577



56. ITALIAN SMALL LETTERS J. F. CRESCI, 1560



57. ENGLISH 17th CENTURY INCISED LETTERS FROM TOMBSTONES

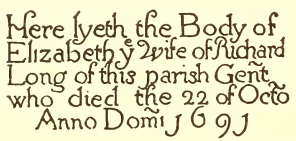


58. MODERN SMALL LETTERS AFTER HRACHOWINA

Venetian
Alphabet
abcdefghí
jklmnopq
rstuvwxyz

59. MODERN SMALL LETTERS CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON

Figures 52 to 59 show several forms of small letter alphabets; those shown in 52 to 56 being taken from "Writing books" by Spanish and Italian writing masters. These writing masters often chose to show their skill by imitating type forms of letters with the pen, but though similar in the individual forms of the letters the written examples exhibit a freedom and harmony in composition impossible for type to equal, and therefore are immeasurably more interesting to the modern penman. Figure 61 illustrates a type form of minuscule which may be commended for study. Other examples of small letters by modern designers will be found in 105, 110, 118 and 131, where they are used in connection with their capital forms.



60. INSCRIPTION FROM ENGLISH SLATE TOMBSTONES, 1691. F.C.B.

The minuscule alphabet by Mr. Claude Fayette Bragdon, 59, is a carefully worked-out form which in its lines closely follows a type face devised by Jenson, the celebrated Venetian printer who flourished toward the end of the sixteenth century. This example together with those shown in 50, 51 and 56 exhibits some conservative variations of the standard models for minuscule letters; and the same may be said of the modern type faces shown in 62, 63 and 64. The various other examples of the small-letter forms illustrated evidence how original and interesting modifications of conservative shapes may be evolved without appreciable loss of legibility.

Figure 61 shows the capital, small letter and italic forms of a type based on old Venetian models, cut by William Caslon in the early part of the eighteenth century, and ever

Quousque tandem abutêre, Catilina, patientia nostra? quamdiu nos etiam furor iste tuus eludet? quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia? nihilne te nocturnum præsidium palatii, nihil urbis vigiliæ,nihil timor populi, nihil consensus bonorum omnium, nihil hic munitissi-

ABCDEFGHIKLMNOPQRSTUVWX

Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra? quamdiu nos etiam furor iste tuus eludet? quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia? nihilne te nocturnum præsidium palatii, nihil urbis vigiliæ, nihil timor populi, nihil consensus bonorum

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

61. ROMAN AND ITALIC TYPE FROM THE SPECIMEN BOOK OF WILLIAM CASLON, 1734

DANTE IS WELCOMED BY HIS ANCESTOR, CACCIAGUIDA. CACCIAGUIDA TELLS OF HIS FAMILY AND OF THE SIMPLE LIFE OF FLORENCE IN OLD DAYS.

CANTO XV.



BENIGN will, wherein the love which righteously inspires always manifests itself, as cupidity does in the evil will, imposed silence on that sweet lyre, & quieted the holy strings which the right hand of heaven slackens & draws tight. How unto just petitions shall those substances be deaf, who, in order to give me wish to pray unto them, were concordant in silence? Well is it that he endlessly should grieve who, for the love of thing which endures not eternally, despoils him of that love.

As, through the tranquil and pure evening skies, a sudden fire shoots from time to time, moving the eyes which were at rest & with

62. MODERN ROMAN TYPE "MONTAIGNE" BRUCE ROGERS

ENGLISH PREFACE TO ROBERT STEPHENS'

APOLOGIE FOR HERODOTUS

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS WILLIAM, EARLE OF PEMBROKE PHILIP, EARLE OF MONTGOMERIE

Our Patrons of Learning & Patterns of Honor

RIght noble Lords: Laertius telleth vs, that in old time there were but ſeuen wiſe men to be found in the world: but now it ſeemes there are hardly ſeuen ignorant. For a man can no ſooner ſet faire marke, but euery bungler will out with a bolt (as though he could *cornicum oculos configere*), and like Roman Cenſor will giue his cenſure, though often no more to the purpoſe than *Magnificat* for *Matins,* as it is in the French prouerb. We are now fallen into that criticall age wherein *Cenſores liberorum* are become CENSORES LIBRORUM; *Lectores,* LICTORES: and euery man's works and writings, (both prime inuentions and ſecond-hand tranſlations) are arraigned at the tribunall of each pedantical Ariſtarchus vnderſtanding.

The World of Wonders, Imprinted for John Norton, 1607.

63. MODERN ROMAN TYPE "RENNER" THEO. L. DE VINNE

CORNELII TACITI DE VITA ET INCIPIT FELICITER



Larorum virorum facta tum, ne nostris quidem aetas omisit, quotiens gressa est vitium tiam recti et invidiam. pronum magisque in ad prodendam virtutis tantum conscientiae pretio ducebatur. potius morum quam adrogantiam aut obtrectationi fuit: adeo virtutes facillime gignuntur. at nunc narraturo quam non petissem incusaturus. tam cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasea, dati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos saevitum, delegato triumviris ministerio in comitio ac foro urerentur. scilicet illo senatus et conscientiam generis humani pientiae professoribus atque omni bona tum occurreret. dedimus profecto

64. MODERN ROMAN TYPE "MERRYMOUNT" BY B. G. GOODHUE

since known by his name. This face has comparatively recently been revived by modern type-founders; and though this revival has provided us with a text letter far superior to the forms previously in use, the modern imitation falls short of the beauty of Caslon's original, as may be seen by comparing the letters shown in 61, which are reproduced from Caslon's specimen-book, issued by him about the middle of the eighteenth century, with the type used in printing this volume, which is a good modern "Caslon."

Figures 62 to 67 show some newly devised type faces, all designed by artists of reputation. Figure 62 illustrates a fount called the "Montaigne" which has been recently completed by Mr. Bruce Rogers for the Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., and cut under his immediate direction, with especial insistance upon an unmechanical treatment of serifs, etc. As a result the "Montaigne" is, for type, remarkable in its artistic freedom, and its forms are well worthy the study of the designer. Both its capitals and small letters suggest the purity of the Italian Renaissance shapes. The letters space rather farther apart than in most types, and the result makes for legibility. Although several other modern faces of type have been designed on much the same lines, notably one for The Dove's Press in England, the "Montaigne" seems the best of them all, because of its freedom, and its absolute divorce from the overdone, exaggerated, heavy-faced effects of the Morris styles of type.

Mr. De Vinne of the De Vinne Press, New York City, has introduced a new type called the "Renner", 63, which was originally cut for some of the Grolier Club's publications. The letters were first photographed from a selected page of Renner's "Quadrigesimale," then care-

MARCVS TVLLIVS CICERO DE SENECTUTE *CATO MAJOR* CAP. XXII APVD XENOPHONTEM AVTEM MORIENS CYRVS MAJOR HAEC DICIT:



OLITE arbitrari, O mei carissimi filii, me, cum a vobis discessero, nusquam aut nullum fore. Nec enim dum eram vobiscum animum meum videbatis, sed eum esse in hoc corpore ex iis rebus quas gerebam intellegebatis. Eundem igitur esse creditote, etiam si nullum videbitis. 80. Nec vero clarorum virorum post mortem honores permanerent, si nihil eorum ipsorum animi efficerent, quo diutius memoriam sui teneremus. Mihi quidem persuaderi numquam potuit animos dum in corporibus essent mortalibus vivere, cum excessissent ex eis emori; nec vero tum animum esse insipientem cum ex insipienti corpore evasisset; sed cum omni admixtione corporis liberatus purus et integer esse coepisset, tum esse sapientem. Atque etiam, cum hominis natura morte dissolvitur, ceterarum rerum perspicuum est quo quaeque discedat, abeunt enim illuc omnia unde orta sunt; animus autem solus nec cum

65. MODERN ROMAN TYPE "CHELTENHAM" BY B. G. GOODHUE

fully studied and redrawn before the punches were cut. Mr. De Vinne has added small capitals and italics to the fount, as well as dotted letters to serve as substitutes for the italic for those who prefer them. The "Renner" type would have been more effective on a larger body; but for commercial usefulness it is generally deemed expedient to employ as small a body as the face of a type will allow. Mr. De Vinne notes, in this connection, that all the important types of the early printers were large, and that a fount designed to-day with regard only to its artistic effectiveness would be cast upon a large body and be of good size.

Mr. Bertram G. Goodhue has designed two founts of Roman type, and is now at work on a Blackletter face. His first fount, cut for Mr. D. B. Updike, of the Merrymount Press, Boston, and known as the "Merrymount," is shown in 64. Intended for large pages and rough paper it necessarily shows to disadvantage in the example given, where the blackness and weight of the letters makes them seem clumsy, despite the refinement of their forms.

The "Cheltenham Old Style," 65, is the other Roman face recently designed by the same artist. It was cut for the Cheltenham Press of New York City; and embodies in its present form many ideas suggested by Mr. Ingalls Kimball of that press. Observe especially the excess in length of the ascenders over the descenders, and that the serifs have been reduced to the minimum. Contrary to the usual custom in type cutting, the round letters do not run above or below the guide lines. The capitals compose excellently; but the small letters are too closely spaced and seem too square for the best effect, and weight has been obtained by so thickening the lines that much delicacy and variety has been lost.

The "Cheltenham Old Style" is, however, very legible when composed into words, and is effective on the page.

Any attempt to get the effect of Blackletter with the Roman form is likely to result clumsily. The celebrated Roman faces designed by William Morris (too familiar to require reproduction here) are, despite their real beauty,

ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘΙΚΛΜΝΞΟΠΡΣΤΥΦΧΨΩ

Ὁρῶ μὲν ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι τὰ παρόντα πράγματα πολλὴν δυσκολίαν ἔχοντα καὶ ταραχήν, οὐ μόνον τῷ πολλὰ προεῖσθαι καὶ μηδὲν εἶναι προὔργου περὶ αὐτῶν εὖ λέγειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν ὑπολοίπων κατὰ ταὐτὰ μηδὲ καθ' ἓν τὸ συμφέρον πάντας ἡγεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν ὠδί, τοῖς δ' ἑτέρως δοκεῖν.

66. MODERN GREEK TYPE SELWYN IMAGE

over-black on the page, and awkward when examined in detail. While the stimulus Morris's work gave to typography was much needed at that time, the present reaction toward more refined faces is most gratifying. By precept and example Mr. Morris produced a salutary revolt against the too thin and light and mechanical type faces before in use, but he went too far in the opposite direction, and we are now certainly falling back upon a more desirable mean.

Mr. Herbert P. Horne is at present designing a new fount of type for the Merrymount Press, Boston, to be

known as the "Mont' Allegro," which seems, from the designs so far as at present completed, likely to prove in some respects the most scholarly and severe of modern faces.

19 Up, Lord, and let not man have the upper hand: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.
20 Put them in fēar, O Lord: that the heathen may know themselves to be but men.

PSALME X.

UT QUID, DOMINE?



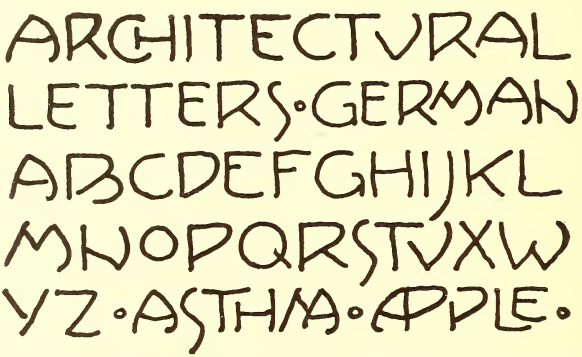
HY standest thou so fār off, O Lord: and hidest thy fāce in the needful time of trou-ble?
2 The ungodly fōr his own lust doth perse-cute the poor: let them be taken in the craf-ty wiliness that they have imagined.
3 For the ungodly hath made boast of his own heart's desire: and speaketh good of the covetous, whom God abhorreth.
4 The ungodly is so proud, that he careth not fōr God: neither is God in all his thoughts.

67. MODERN ROMAN TYPE C. R. ASHBEE

The Greek type designed for the Macmillan Company of England, by Mr. Selwyn Image, 66, is of sufficient interest to be shown here, despite the fact that it is not strictly germane to our subject. In this face Mr. Image has

returned to the more classic Greek form, although the result may at first glance seem illegible to the reader familiar with the more common cursive letters.

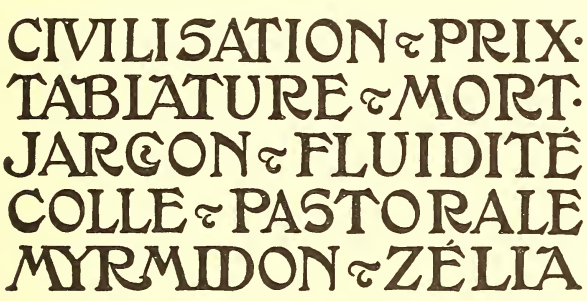
The type shown in 67 is a new English face designed by Mr. C. R. Ashbee for a prayerbook for the King. Interesting as it is, it seems in many ways too extreme and eccentric to be wholly satisfactory: the very metal of type would seem to postulate a less "tricky" treatment.



68. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS AFTER J. M. OLBRICH

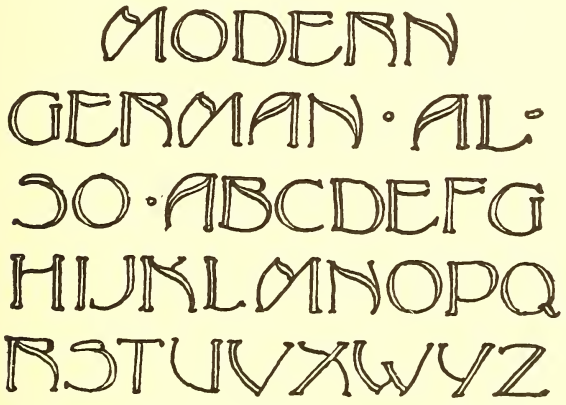
It is interesting to attempt a discrimination between the various national styles of pen letters which the recently revived interest in the art of lettering is producing; and it is especially worth while to note that the activity seems, even in Germany, to be devoted almost exclusively to the development and variation of the Roman forms. It is noteworthy, too, after so long a period of the dull copying of bad forms, and particularly of bad type forms, that the modern trend is distinctly in the direction of freedom; though this freedom is more marked in French and German

than in English or American work. Hand in hand with this increased freedom of treatment has naturally come a



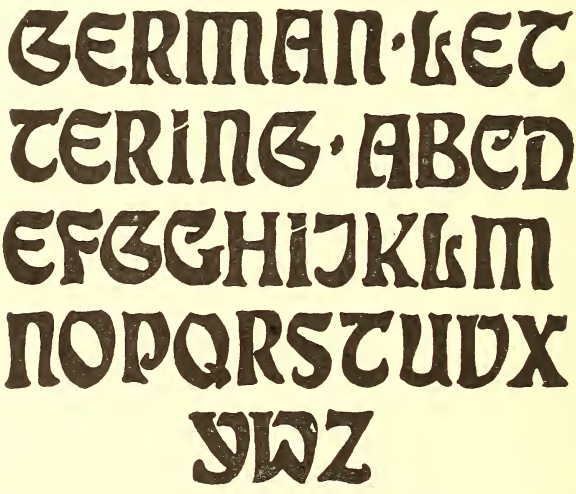
69. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS GUSTAVE LEMMEN

clearer disclosure of the mediums employed; and indeed in much of the best modern work the designer has so far lent himself to his tools that the tools themselves have, in great measure, become responsible for the resulting letter forms.



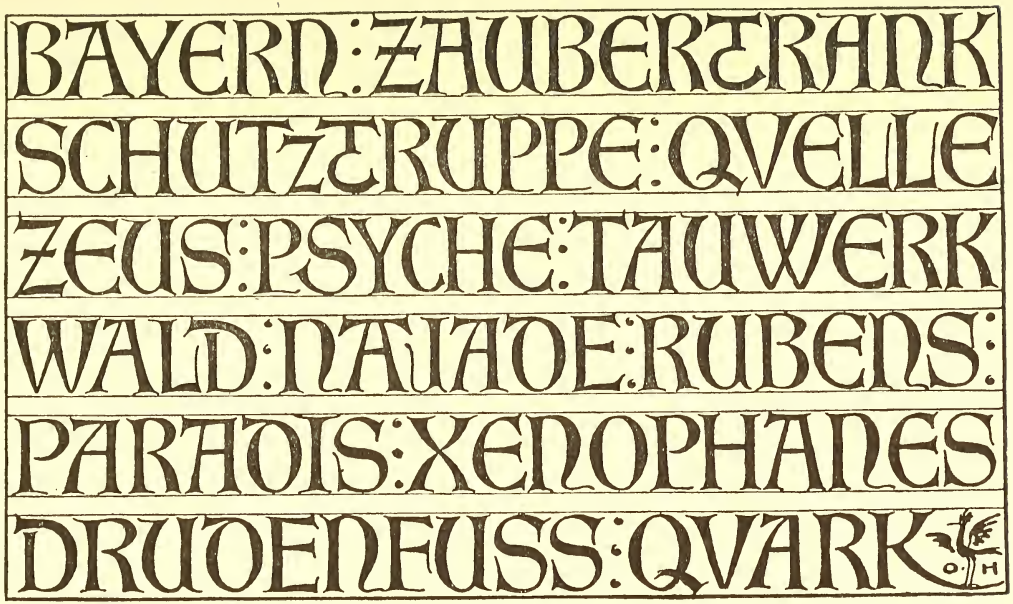
70. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS AFTER ALOIS LUDWIG

Moreover modern designers are showing a welcome attention to minuscule letters, and it even seems possible that before long some small letter forms that shall be distinctively of the pen may be developed, and that the use of type models for minuscule pen letters will no longer be found necessary or commendable.

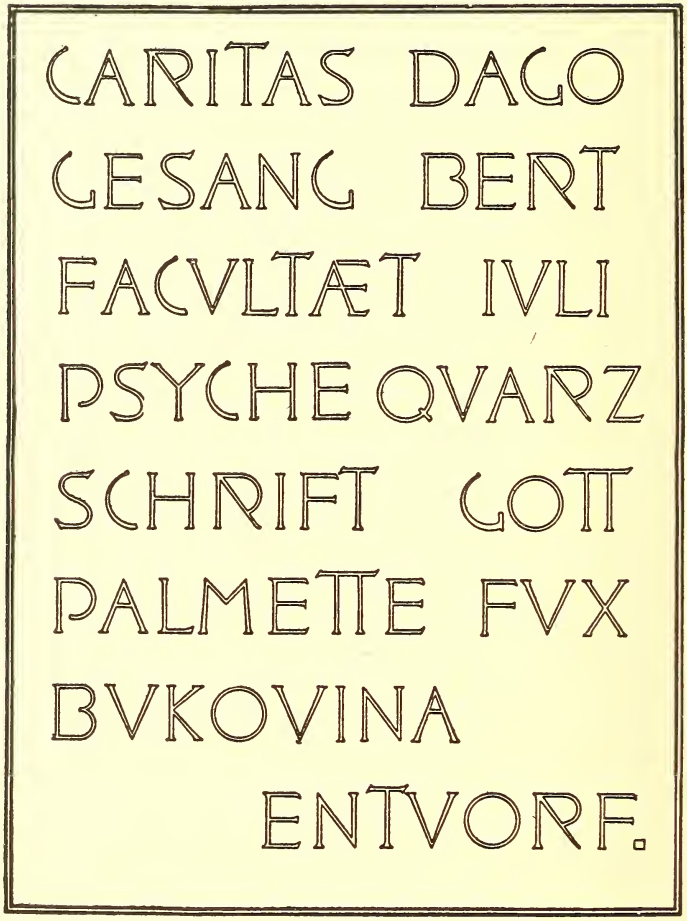


71. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS AFTER OTTO ECKMANN

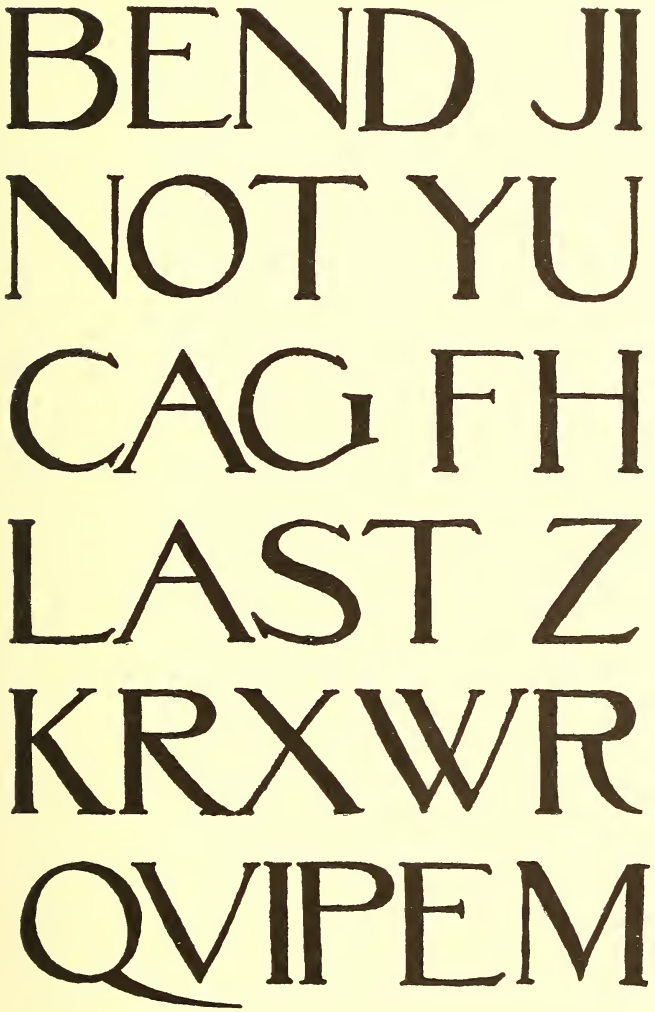
Another noticeable tendency in modern lettering seems to be the gradual promotion of small letter forms to the dignity of capitals, (see 79 and 98 for examples) in much the same way as the Uncial letter and its immediate derivatives produced the present small letter. It is surely to be hoped that this movement may not lose vitality before it has had time to enrich us with some new and excellent forms.



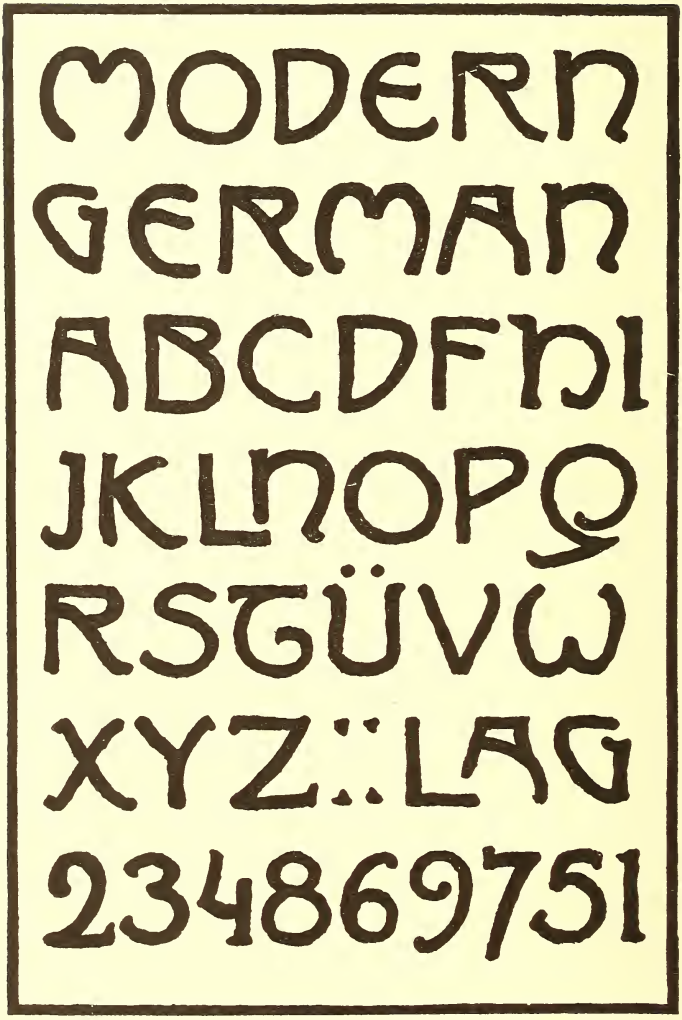
72. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS OTTO HUPP



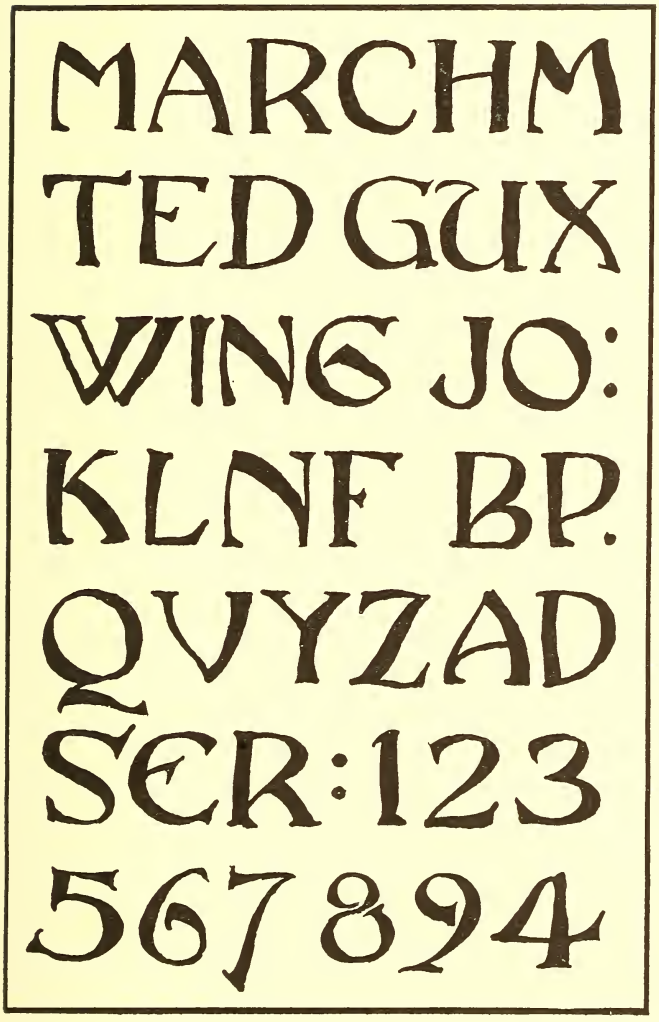
73. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS JOSEPH PLÉCNIK



74. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS AFTER FRANZ STUCK



75. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS F. C. B.



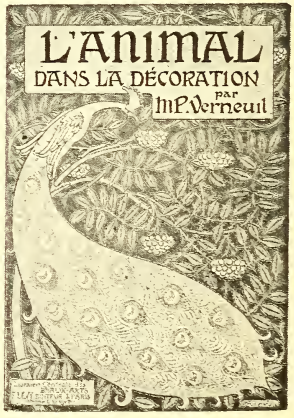
76. MODERN GERMAN CAPITALS AFTER BERNHARD PANKOK



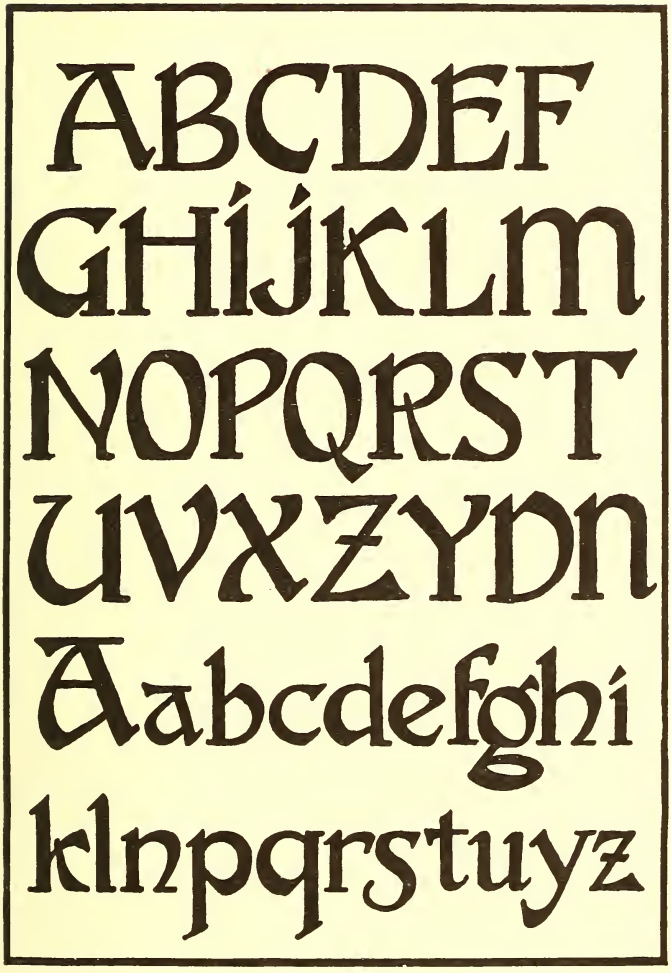
77. MODERN FRENCH POSTER
THEO. VAN RYSSELBERGHE

The influence of nationality is strongly shown in the modern lettering of all countries; and it is generally as easy to recognize a specimen as the work of a German, French, English, or American artist, respectively, no matter how individual he may be, as it is to tell the difference between the work of two different designers.

The modern German seems to have an undeniable freshness of outlook on the Roman alphabet. He treats it with a freedom and variety and a certain disregard of precedent — induced, perhaps, by his schooling in Blackletter—that often produces delightful, though sometimes, be it added, direful results. But if the extreme and bizarre forms be thrown aside the designer may obtain suggestions of great benefit and value from the more restrained examples of German work. Many eminent German draughtsmen, whose work is all too little known in this country, are



78. MODERN FRENCH COVER
M. P. VERNEUIL

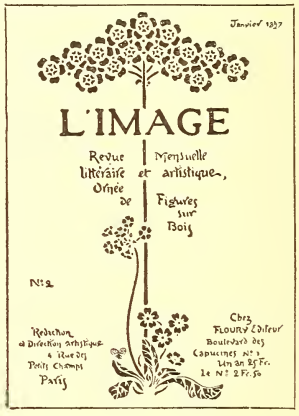


79. MODERN FRENCH LETTERS AFTER M. P. VERNEUIL

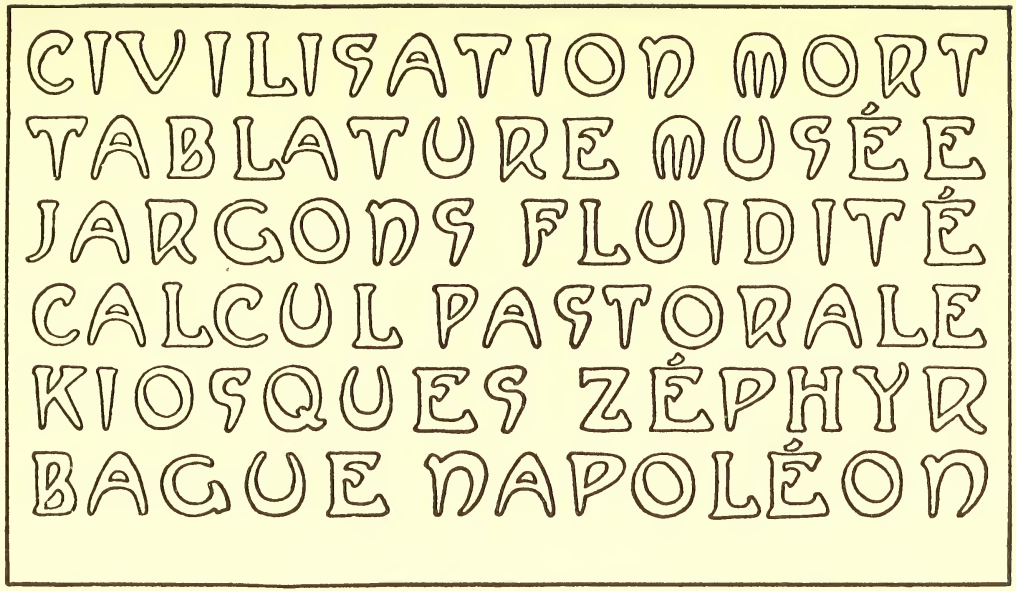


80. MODERN FRENCH POSTER
P. BONNARD

using letters with the same distinction that has of late years marked their purely decorative work, as the specimens shown in 68 to 76 will evidence. Figures 68 and 75 show forms which are perhaps especially representative of the general modern tendency in German work and many German artists are using letters of very similar general forms to these although, of course, with individual variations. Figures 70 and 73 show two very original and pleasing styles, also markedly German. In spite of the national drift toward the Roman, much modern German lettering still takes the Gothic and Blackletter forms; and the specimen reproduced in 71 shows a curious combination of the Gothic, Uncial and Roman forms pervaded by the German spirit. The beautiful lettering in 72 seems to have been inspired from a stone-cut Uncial. Figure 74 shows an almost strictly Roman letter, and yet is as unmistakably German in handling as any of the other examples shown.

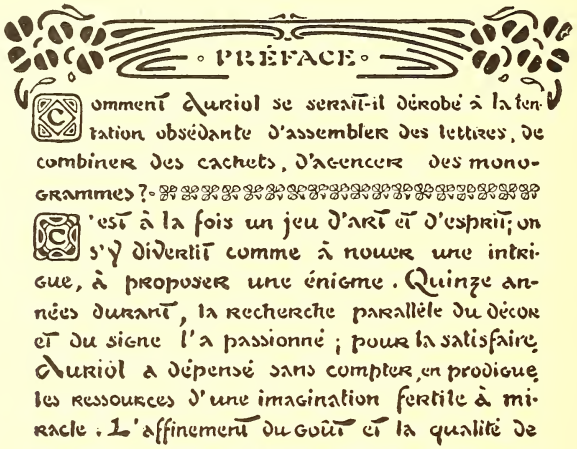


81. MODERN FRENCH COVER
GEORGE AURIOL



82. MODERN FRENCH CAPITALS — ALPHONS M. MUCHA

Among the examples of modern French lettering, those shown in 78 and 79 are perhaps the most typical of the modern school. This style of letter was given its most



83. MODERN FRENCH LETTERED PAGE GEORGE AURIOL

consistent form by the joint efforts of M. P. Verneuil and some of the pupils of Eugène Grasset, after whose letter it was originally modeled. Grasset freely varies his use of this form in his different designs, as in 85, but founds many of his best specimens upon the earlier French models.

GEORGE AURIOL
his usual letters. 1 2 3
4 William the pilot
Dublin. flowering valet
zebra holiday Æneas
Van Dyck quaint fox.
dez jœ 5 6 7 8 9 0.

A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O
P Q R S T U
V X W
Y Z
&

84. MODERN FRENCH LETTERS "CURSIVE" GEORGE AURIOL

M. George Auriol has extended the modern use of drawn letters by publishing a number of small books which he has handwritten throughout, although the form of letter he generally uses for this purpose is purely modern and not at all like the texts of the medieval scribes. M. Auriol's letter is beautifully clear, readable and original; "brushy" in its technique, yet suitable for rapid writing. He calls



85. MODERN FRENCH COVER DESIGN
EUGÈNE GRASSET

ART·HORIZON·STYLE·WAX
FAVOR·JVLIVS·CÆSAR·I
BOLINGBROKE·DEFEAT
COAST·LATITVDE·KNIGHT
SVCCESS·PATRIOT·QVEEN
DOVBT·PYGMY·

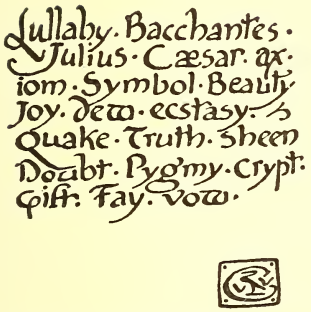
86. MODERN ENGLISH CAPITALS WALTER CRANE



87. MODERN ENGLISH POSTER WALTER CRANE



88. MODERN ENGLISH CAPITALS WALTER CRANE



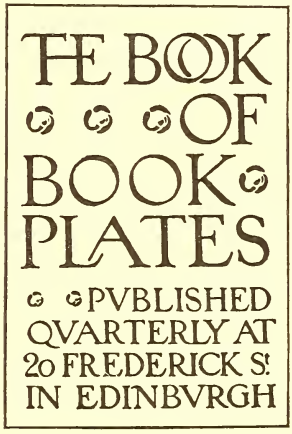
89. MODERN ENGLISH LETTERS
WALTER CRANE

it a "Cursive" letter, and has recently made designs for its use in type. The page shown in 83 is from the preface to a book of his well-known designs for monograms, and the entire text is written in this cursive form. The individual letters of this "Cursive" may be more easily studied in 84. The cover for "L'Image", 81, shows the same designer's use of a more conventional Roman form.

The poster by M. Theo. van Rysselberghe shown in 77 exhibits two interesting forms of French small letters that are worthy of study and suggestive for development.

M. Alphons Mucha employs a distinctive letter, especially fitted to his technique, which he uses almost invariably, 82.

Much recent French lettering inclines toward a certain formlessness, that, although sometimes admirable when regarded merely from the point of view of harmony with the design, has little value otherwise. A typical specimen of such formless lettering is that shown in the very charming



90. MODERN ENGLISH TITLE
JOSEPH W. SIMPSON

"Revue Blanche" poster, 80. Excellent when considered with the design, the lettering alone makes but an indifferent showing.

The Italian designers of letters have not yet evolved any very distinctive national forms. In many ways Italian work resembles the German. It has less originality, but greater subtlety and refinement.



91. MODERN ENGLISH POSTER
JOSEPH W. SIMPSON

The strongest personality among modern British letterers is Mr. Walter Crane. Characteristic examples of his work are shown in 86, 87, 88 and 89. Although sometimes apparently careless and too often rough, his lettering has the merit and charm of invariably disclosing the instrument and the material employed. Mr. Crane is especially fond of an Uncial pen form, which he varies with masterful freedom. It may be mentioned in passing that he is perhaps the only designer who has been able to make the wrongly accented Q seem consistent (compare 86), or who has conquered its swash tail when the letter is accented in this unusual way.



92. MODERN ENGLISH COVER
WILLIAM NICHOLSON



93. MODERN ENGLISH COVER
LEWIS F. DAY

Mr. Lewis F. Day has become a recognized authority on lettering, both through his writings and his handiwork. His great versatility makes it difficult to select a specimen which may be taken as characteristic of his work; but perhaps the lettering shown in 95 is as representative as any that could be chosen. Among his designs the magazine cover, 93, is an unusually free and effective composition, and its letter forms possess the variety required to satisfy the eye when so much of the whole effect of the design depends upon them.

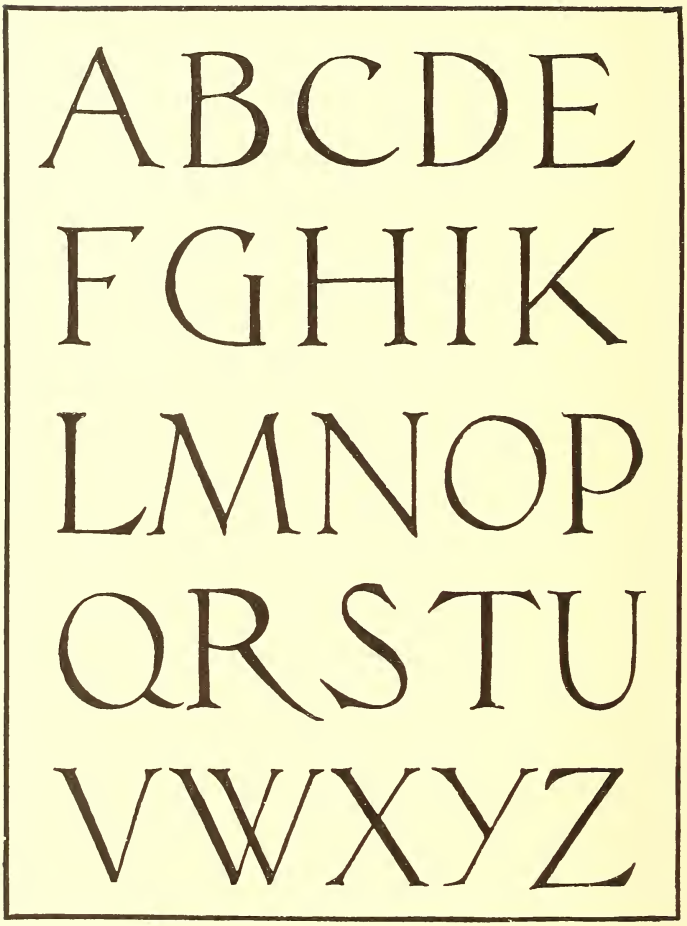
The style of lettering ordinarily employed by Mr. Selwyn Image — a style of marked originality and distinction — is well exhibited in the design for a book cover, 98.

The name of Mr. Charles Ricketts is intimately associated with the Vale Press. The detail of the title-page reproduced in 100 shows a characteristic bit of his work.

Mr. J. W. Simpson, one of the younger British draughtsmen, uses a graceful and interestingly linked Roman form shown in the panel from a title-page, 90. The bizarre

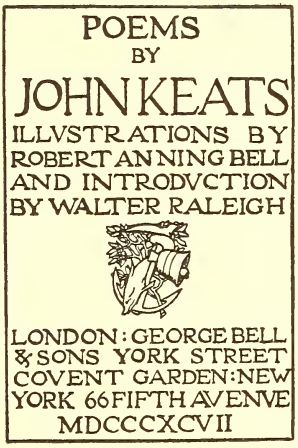


94. MODERN ENGLISH TITLE
GORDON CRAIG

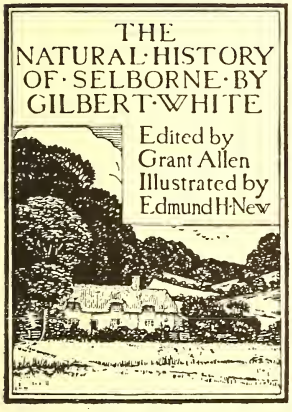


95. MODERN ENGLISH CAPITALS LEWIS F. DAY

letter by the same artist, 91, is fairly representative of a style recently come into vogue among the younger British draughtsmen, which is related to a form of letter brought into fashion by the new English school of designers on wood, among whom may be mentioned Mr. William Nicholson and Mr. Gordon Craig, both of whom have done lettering distinguished by its indication of the medium employed. Figure 92 shows Mr. Nicholson's favorite type of letter



96. MODERN ENGLISH TITLE
ROBERT ANNING BELL



97. MODERN ENGLISH COVER
EDMUND H. NEW



98. MODERN ENGLISH COVER
SELWYN IMAGE

fairly, and the style of Mr. Craig's work is suggested by the title for a book cover in 94.

The book cover, 97, by Mr. Edmund H. New, shows



99. MODERN ENGLISH CAPITALS ANONYMOUS

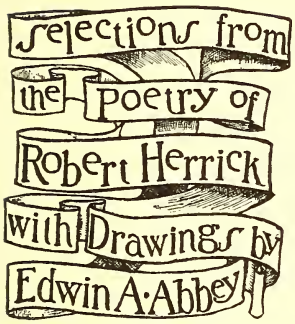
variants of the Roman capital and minuscule forms, which closely adhere to classic models.

Mr. Robert Anning Bell has done much distinctive lettering in intimate association with design. Figure 96 is fairly representative of his style of work.



100. MODERN ENGLISH CAPITALS CHARLES RICKETTS

Such other British artists as Messrs. Alfred Parsons, James F. Sullivan, Hugh Thompson, Herbert Railton, Byam Shaw, H. Granville Fell and A. Garth Jones, although much better known for their designs than for their letters, occa-



101. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
EDWIN A. ABBEY

sionally give us bits of lettering which are both unusual and excellent; but these bits are commonly so subordinated to the designs in which they are used and so involved with them as to be beyond the scope of the present book.

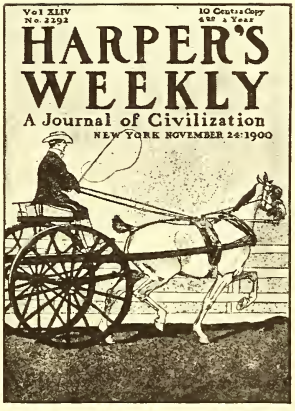
In illustrating the lettering of American artists it has been unfortunately found necessary



102. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE ANONYMOUS

to omit the work of many well-known designers, either because their usual style of lettering is too similar in fundamental forms to the work of some other draughtsman, or because the letters they commonly employ are not distinctive or individual.

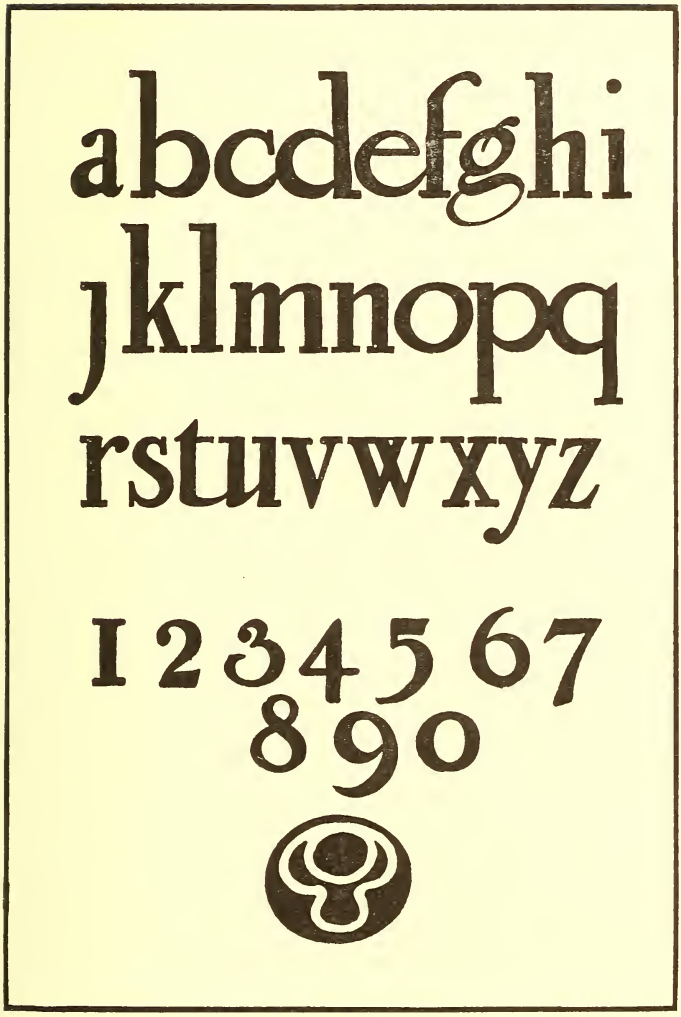
Mr. Edwin A. Abbey is a notable example of an artist who has not disdained to expend both time and practice on such a minor art as lettering



103. MODERN AMERICAN COVER
EDWARD PENFIELD



104. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS EDWARD PENFIELD



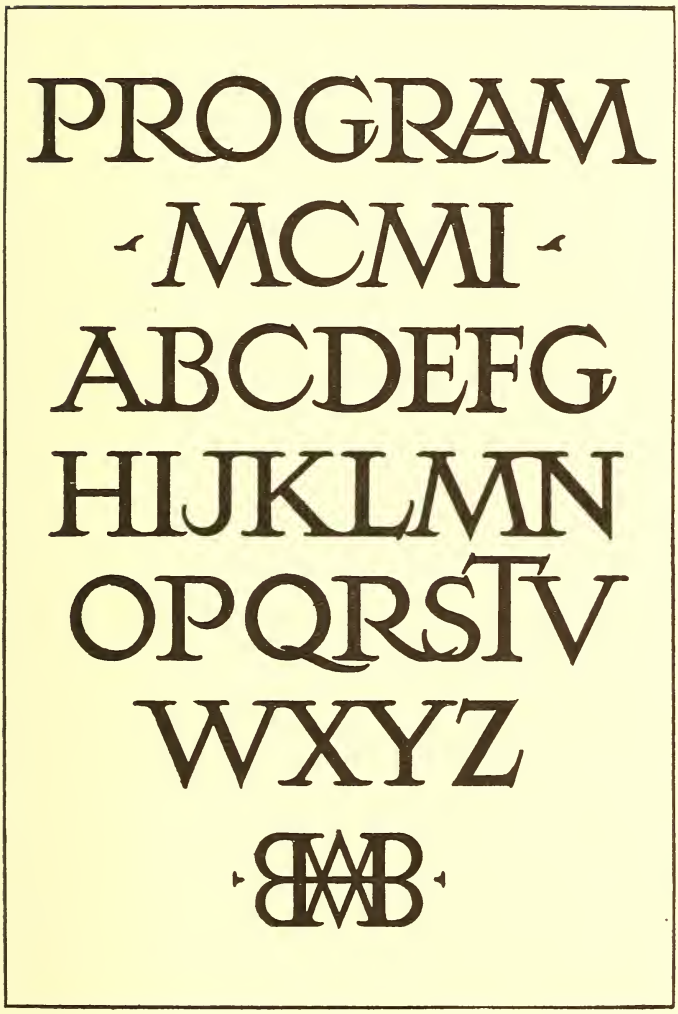
105. MODERN AMERICAN SMALL LETTERS EDWARD PENFIELD



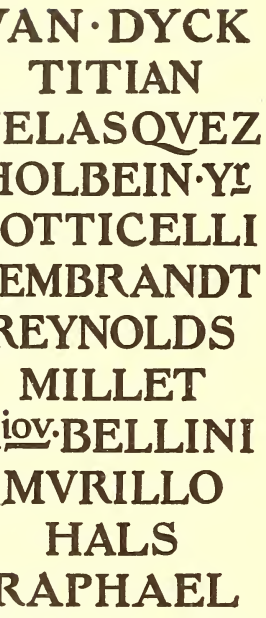
106. MODERN AMERICAN COVER DESIGN
H. VAN B. MAGONIGLE

that he might be able to letter his own designs, as the beautiful page, shown in 153 in the succeeding chapter, will sufficiently prove. The lettering of the title-page for Herrick's poems, 101, by the same draughtsman, is likewise excellent, being both original and appropriate. The letters in both these examples are modeled after old work, and both display an unusually keen grasp of the limitations and possibilities of the forms employed, especially in the former, 153, where the use of capitals to form words is particularly noteworthy, while in general composition and spacing the spirit of the letter used (compare 179) has been perfectly preserved.

Mr. Edward Penfield's work first attracted attention through the series of posters which he designed for 'Harper's Magazine' with unfailing fertility of invention for several years. During this time he evolved a style of letter which exactly fitted the character of his work. The cover design shown in 103 displays his characteristic letter in actual use; while the two interesting pages of large and small letter alphabets by him, 104 and 105, show the latest and best development of these letter forms. The heading



107. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS H. VAN B. MAGONIGLE



108. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS
B. G. GOODHUE

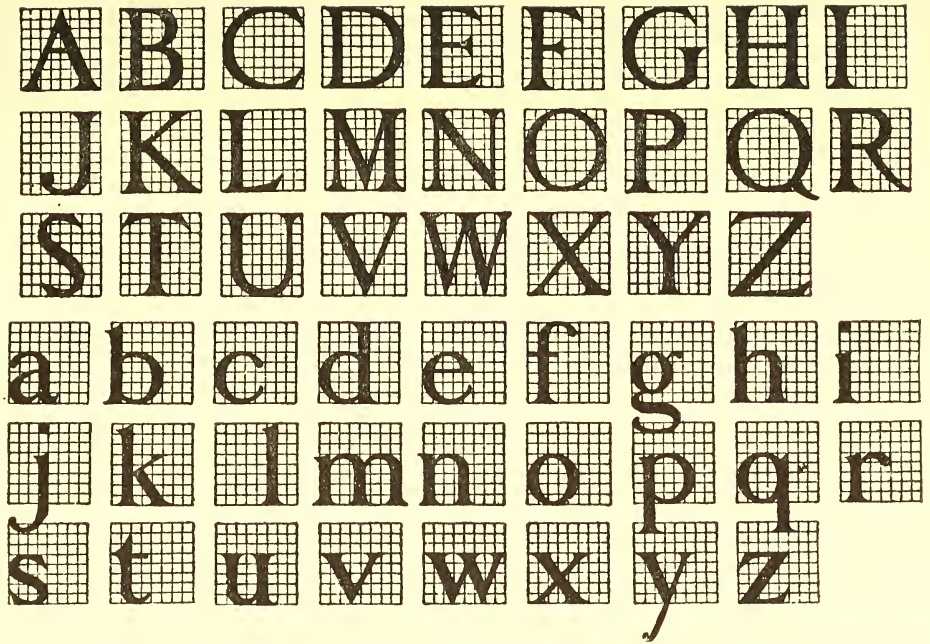
shown in 102 exhibits a slightly different letter, evidently based upon that used by Mr. Penfield.

The capitals by Mr. H. Van B. Magonigle, shown in 107, are derived from classic Roman forms but treated with a modern freedom that makes them unusually attractive. They appear, however, to better advantage in actual use in conjunction with a design, 106, than when shown in the necessarily restricted form of an alphabetical page panel.

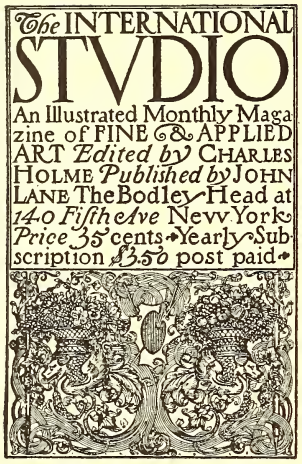
Mr. Bertram G. Goodhue, whose designs for type have already been mentioned, is a



109. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE WILL BRADLEY

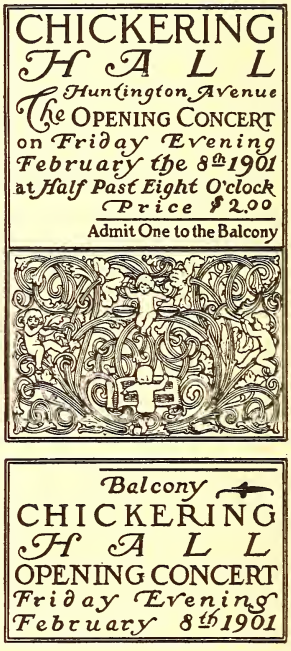


110. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS AND SMALL LETTERS WILL BRADLEY (1896)

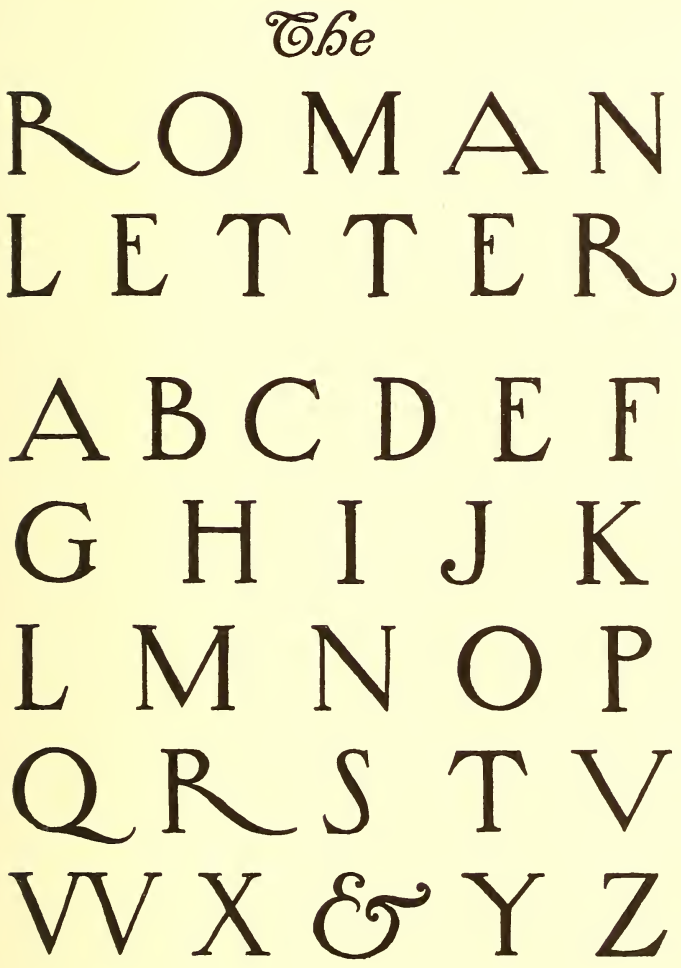


111. MODERN AMERICAN COVER
WILL BRADLEY

Mr. Will Bradley uses a very individual style of the Roman capital, often marked by a peculiar exaggeration in the width of the round letters, contrasted with narrow tall forms in such letters as E, F and L. Mr. Bradley has become more free and unconventional in his later work, but his specimens have always been noteworthy for beauty of line and spacing; see 111. Figure 109 shows his employment of a brush-made variant of the Roman form; most facile and careful letterer. Although his name is more intimately associated with Blackletter (examples of his work in that style are shown in the following chapter), he has devised some very interesting variations of the Roman forms, such as that used in 108, as an example.



112. MODERN AMERICAN TICKET
A. J. IORIO



113. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS AFTER WILL BRADLEY

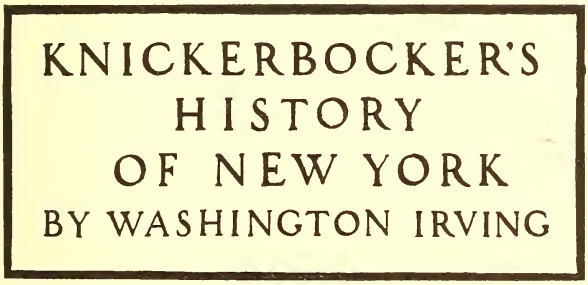
ODES OF
PINDAR

LONDON

A B C D E F
G H I K L M
N O P Q R S
T V X Y Z

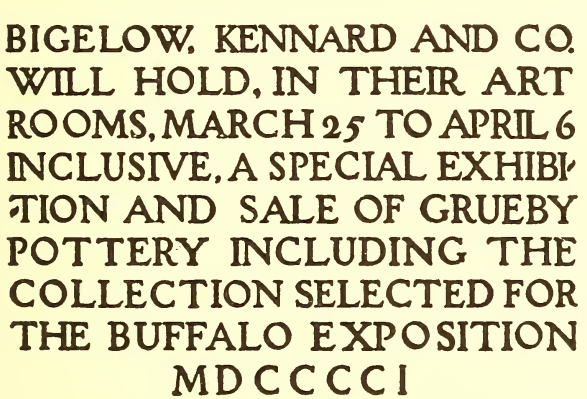
114. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS MAXFIELD PARRISH

and 110 shows both capitals and small letters drawn in his earlier and less distinctive style.



115. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE MAXFIELD PARRISH

The ticket, 112, designed by Mr. A. J. Iorio, suggests what our theatre tickets might be made. In spacing and

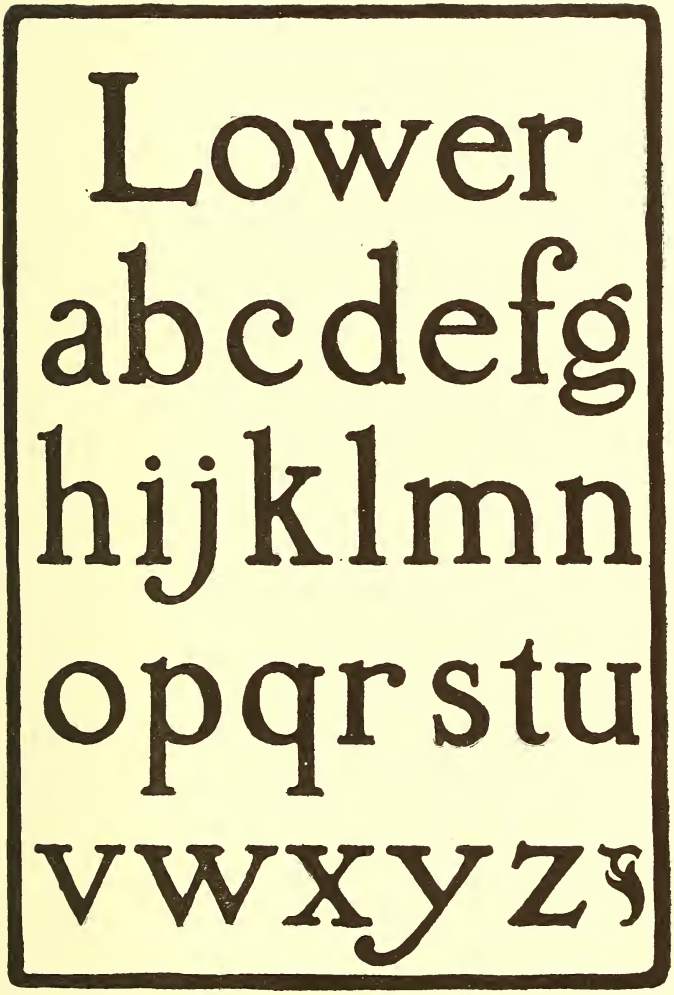


116. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS A. B. LE BOUTILLIER

general arrangement of the letters and the freedom of treatment, Mr. Iorio's work may be compared with much of the



117. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS A. B. LE BOUTILLIER



118. MODERN AMERICAN SMALL LETTERS A. B. LE BOUTILLIER

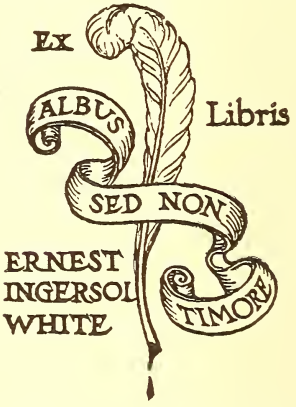


119. MODERN AMERICAN POSTER
A. B. LE BOUTILLIER

Le Boutillier is always notable for spacing and composition. Figures 117 and 118 exhibit excellent capital and small-letter forms (which, by the way, were drawn at the same size as the reproductions); and work of Mr. Bradley. Figure 113 shows a modern Roman capital form modeled upon the work of Mr. Bradley.

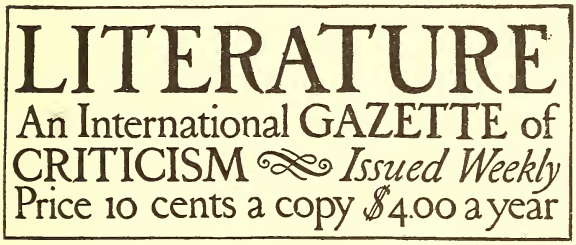
Mr. Maxfield Parrish commonly employs a widely spaced letter, fashioned closely after the old German models, beautiful in its forms, and displaying the individuality of the artist in its composition. The form and use of Mr. Parrish's usual letter is well shown in 114; and the title from a book cover design, 115, shows yet another example of the letter in service.

The lettering of Mr. A. B.



120. AMERICAN BOOK-PLATE
CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON

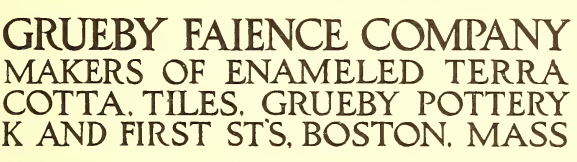
the two other specimens of Mr. Le Boutillier's work, 116 and 119, which are reproduced to show his letters in use, will be found exemplars for spacing, composition, balance



121. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE C. F. BRAGDON

of weight and color, and, in the latter drawing, for harmony between the lettering and the treatment of the design.

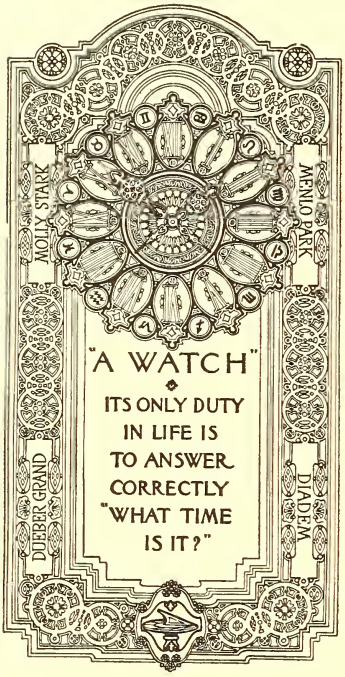
The form of letter preferred by Mr. Claude Fayette Bragdon is represented by the page of small letters, 59, which, as we have already said, are closely modeled on the type alphabet designed by Jenson. In Mr. Bragdon's ver-



122. MODERN AMERICAN LETTER-HEAD C. F. BRAGDON

sion they represent an excellently useful and conservative style of small letter. They are shown in use, with harmonious capitals and italics, in the 'Literature' cover design, 121. In the small book-plate, reproduced in 120, Mr.

Bragdon has used a very graceful variant, especially noteworthy for its freedom of serif treatment; and in the letter-heading, 122, he has employed an attractive capital of still different character.

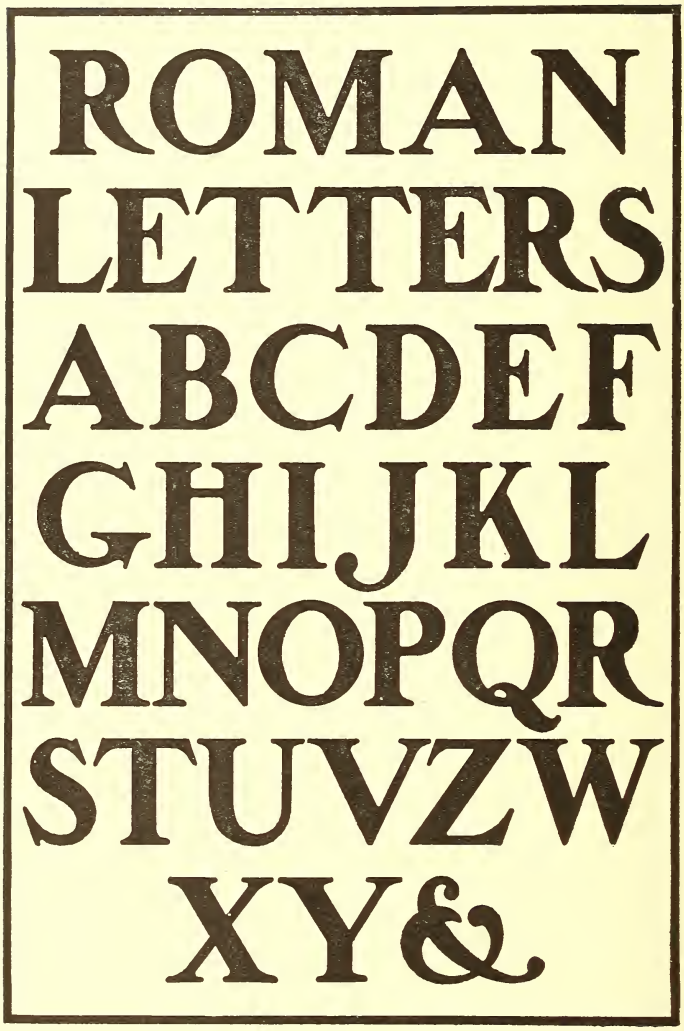


123. MODERN AMERICAN COVER
H. L. BRIDWELL

Mr. H. L. Bridwell has originated the singularly excellent letter shown in 124, which is founded upon some of the modern French architectural forms. He uses it with great freedom and variety in spacing according to the effect that he desires to produce. In one instance he will jam the letters together in an oddly crowded line, while in another we find them spread far apart, but always with excellent results as regards the design as a whole. Something of this variation of spacing is shown in 123. In the numerous theatrical posters which Mr. Bridwell has designed—and which too seldom bear his signature—he employs a great variety of lettering. Sometimes, of course, the freedom of his work is restricted by the conservatism of clients; but often the letter forms here illustrated add to the style and distinction of his designs.



124. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS H. L. BRIDWELL



125. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS FRANK HAZENPLUG



126. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS FRANK HAZENPLUG

Mr. Frank Hazenplug, the author of much clever decorative lettering, has evolved a very black and striking style of capital that still retains grace. Figures 125 and 126 show two sets of Mr. Hazenplug's capitals. A book cover on which he has used small letters in an original way is reproduced in 127. Figure 129 shows the employment of a heavy-faced letter similar to that exhibited in alphabet 126, but suggestive in its serif treatment of Mr. Penfield's letter.



127. MODERN AMERICAN COVER
FRANK HAZENPLUG

Mr. Edward Edwards employs a letter, 128, which, though rather conventional in its lines, is noteworthy for its treatment of serifs and its spacing.

Mr. Guernsey Moore's letters shown in 130 are naturally better both in intrinsic form, spacing and composition than the widely used "Post Old Style" types which were based upon them. The large and small letters displayed in 133 show a form that, at the present writing, seems to be in considerable favor. It is, however, too extreme, and its peculiarities are too exaggerated to allow it to become a permanent style. But like the extravagant German forms



128. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
EDWARD EDWARDS



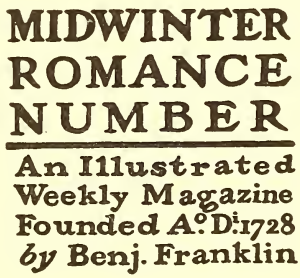
129.—MODERN AMERICAN COVER
FRANK HAZENPLUG

already referred to, it has also apparent advantages; and a few of its characteristics are not unlikely to survive in some more conservative adaptation.

The letter by Mr. Harry Everett Townsend shown in 131 is most distinctive in effect —a more refined form of the rapidly drawn character shown in 138.

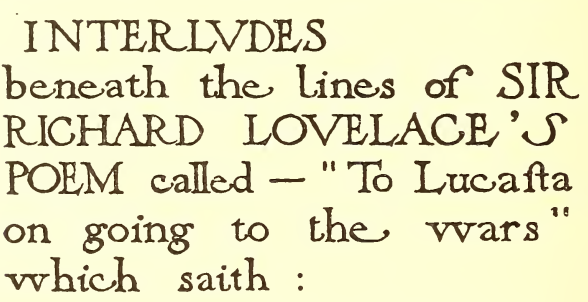
Mr. Howard Pyle often gives us charming bits of lettering in connection with his illustrations. The heading, 132, shows a characteristic line. Most of Mr. Pyle's lettering is "Colonial" or Georgian in style, though the initials he uses with it are generally rendered in the fashions of the early German woodcuts, somewhat similar to Holbein's initials for the "Dance of Death."

One of the most original of American letterers is Mr. Orson Lowell. Usually closely conjoined with design, his lettering does not show to its full value when reproduced apart from its surroundings, for much of its charm depends



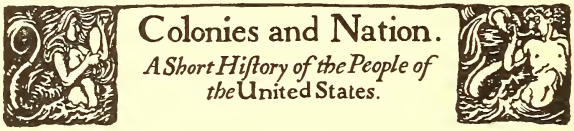
130. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
GUERNSEY MOORE

upon its harmony in line and color with the accompanying drawing Mr. Lowell has taken the same basic forms as those used by Mr. Penfield, and has played with them until



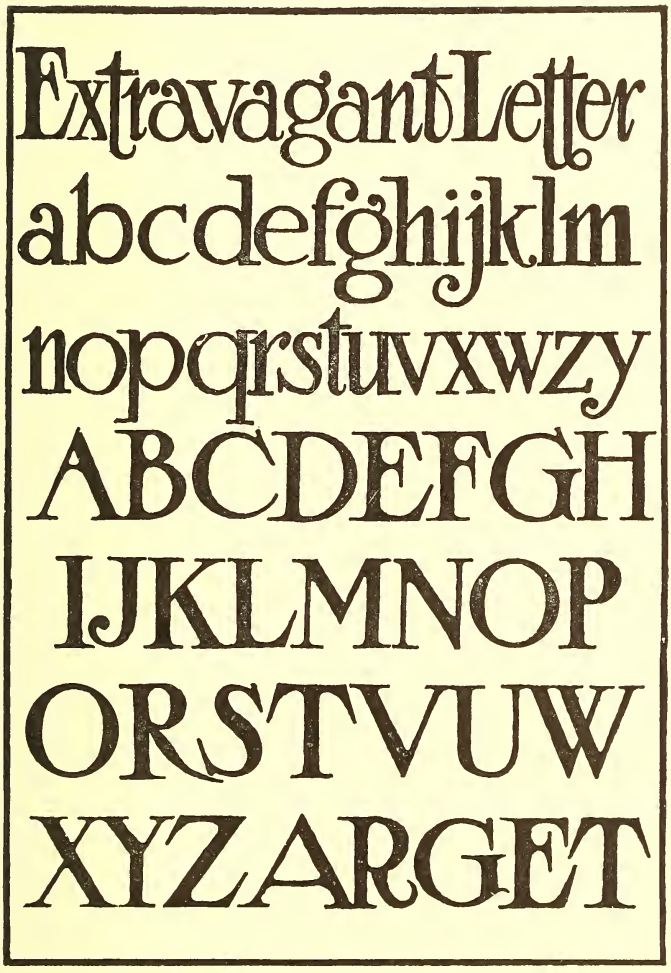
131. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE HARRY E. TOWNSEND

he has developed a series of most ingenious and fanciful letters. The examples reproduced in 136 and 137 but inadequately show a few of the many forms that Mr. Lowell employs with remarkable fertility of invention and delightfully decorative effect of line. The small letters, 135, shown opposite his capitals, 134, are not by Mr. Lowell,

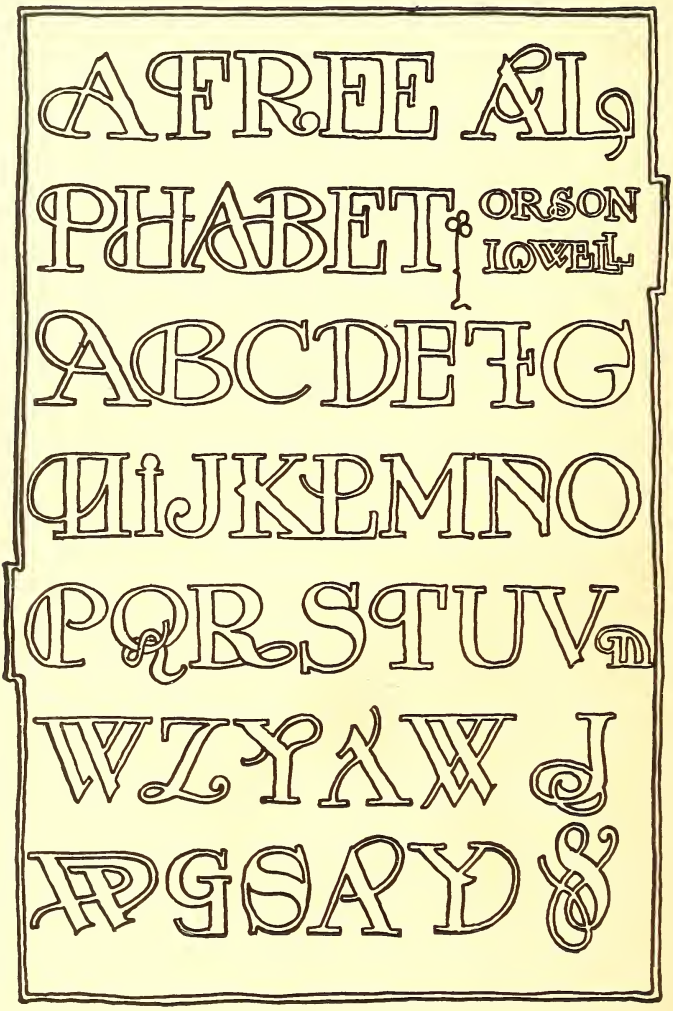


132. MODERN AMERICAN HEADING HOWARD PYLE

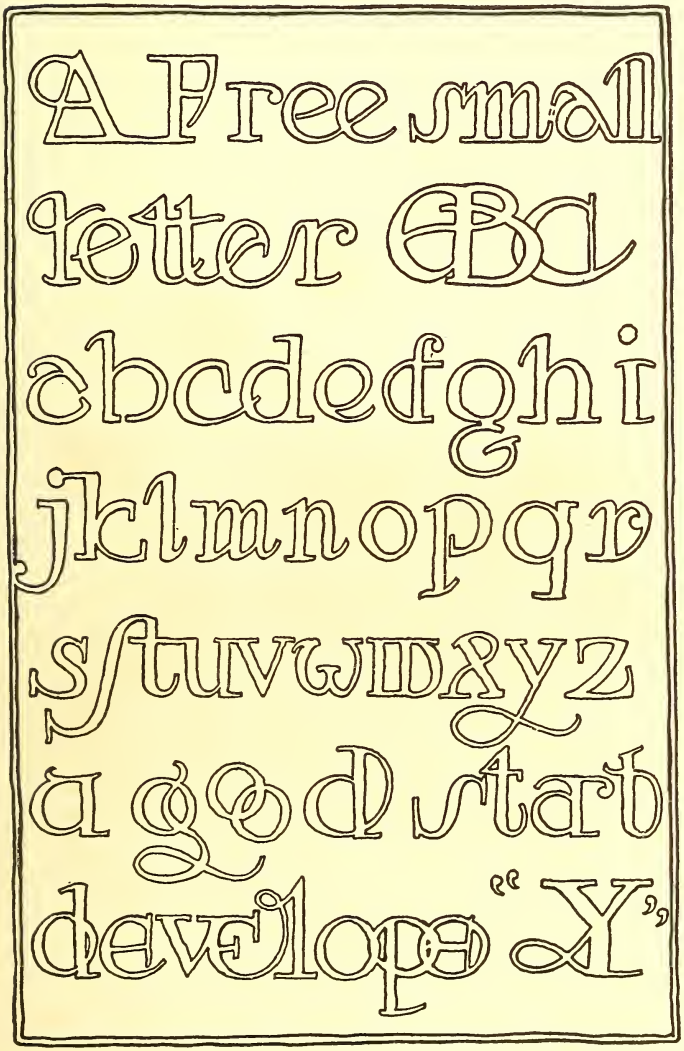
nor are they in any way equal to his own small letters, of which regrettably few appear in his published work; but they may serve to exhibit a similar method of treating a much more conventional form of minuscule than Mr.



133. MODERN AMERICAN LETTERS F. C. B.

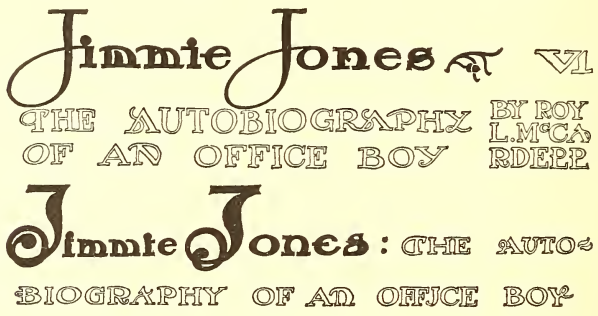


134. MODERN AMERICAN CAPITALS AFTER ORSON LOWELL



135. MODERN AMERICAN SMALL LETTERS F. C. B

Lowell would himself use for the same purpose. Despite its unconventionality, however, an examination of Mr. Lowell's work will show that each letter has been developed to fit the space between its neighbors and to balance and

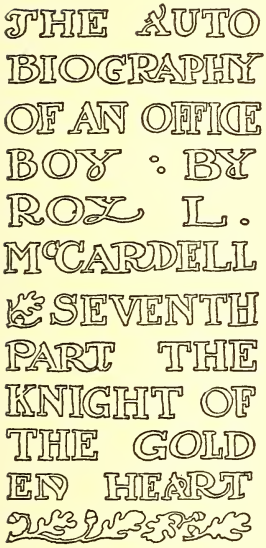


136. MODERN AMERICAN TITLES ORSON LOWELL

relieve their forms; and that, fanciful as some of the shapes may appear, they have invariably been knowingly worked out, and always appear harmonious and fit.

The pages of letters shown in 138, 139 and 140 are intended to suggest forms which, while suitable for rapid use, yet possess some individuality and character. The so-called "Cursive" letter by Mr. Maxfield Parrish, 140, is particularly effective for such informal use — in fact, its very charm lies in its informality — and is quite as distinctively "pen-ny" as any of Mr. Crane's work of the same kind.

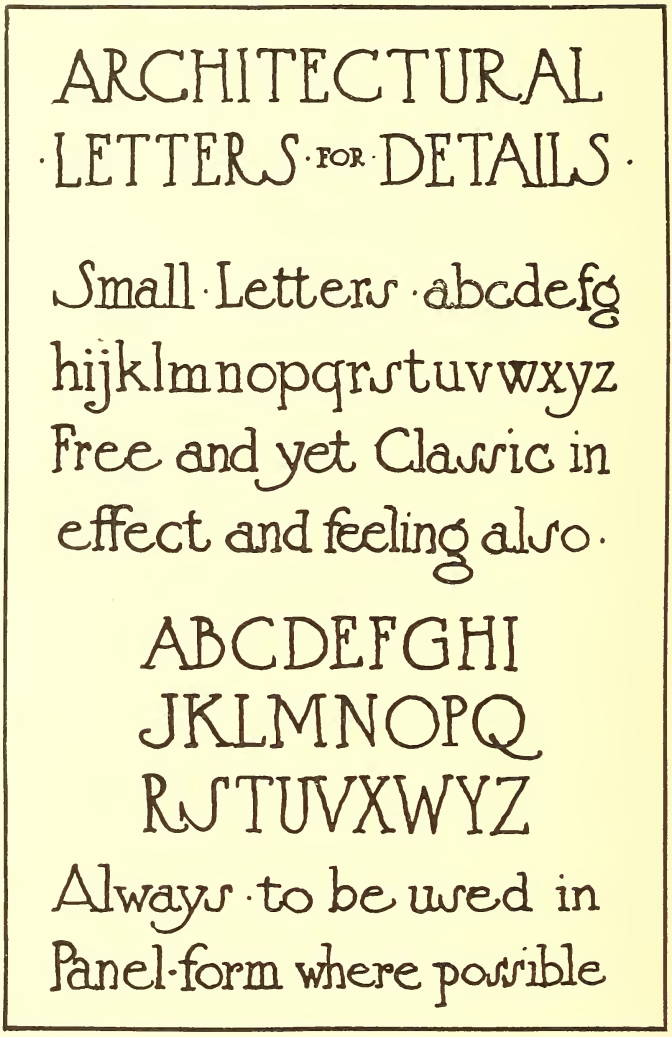
A glance over the field of modern examples will disclose, first, a general tendency to break away from the older type models in pen-drawn forms; second, a growing partiality for the small letter, and third, a sporadic disposition to use capital and minuscule forms interchangeably. The first



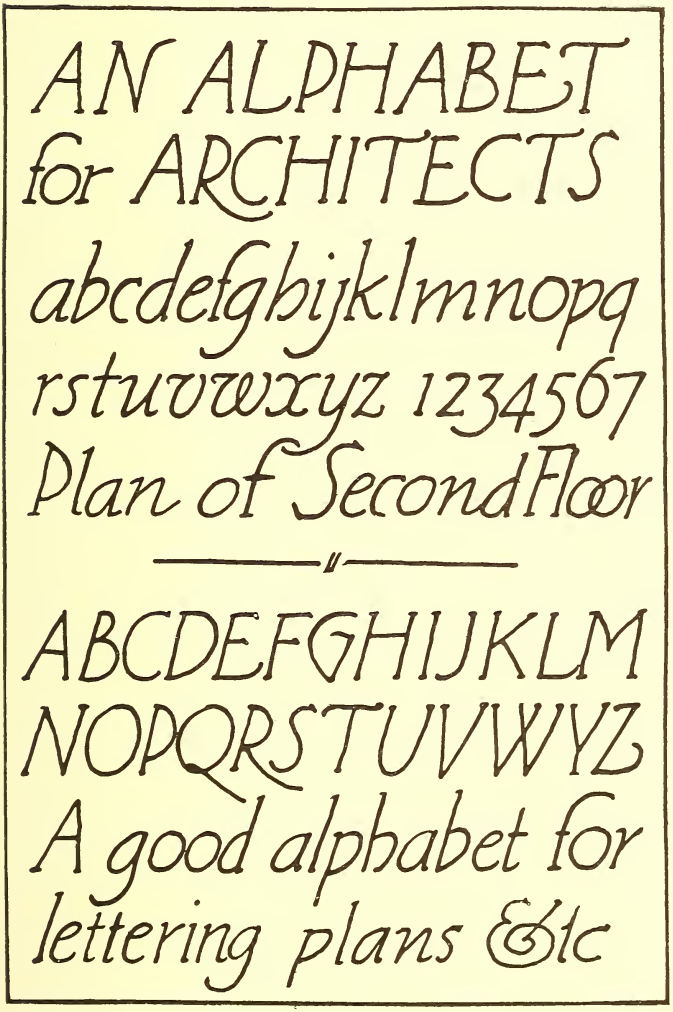
137. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
ORSON LOWELL

trend may be noticed by comparing the letter shown in 132, which is closely modeled after type, with that shown in 136, in which an opposite method is followed, and the letters are so treated in handling form and color as to best harmonize with the design itself. The possibilities latent in the small letter are indicated by such interesting uses as those shown in figures 77, 89, 98, 101, 111, 112, 121, 127, 130 and 131. American designers seem to be especially interested in the development of the small letter. Of the intermingling of the capital and small letter shapes examples may be found in figures 71, 75, 77, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 98, 127 and 134. In these examples it will be noted that the minuscules seem to be more easily transformed into capitals than do the capitals into minuscules; only a few of the latter appearing to lend themselves harmoniously to the small letter guise.

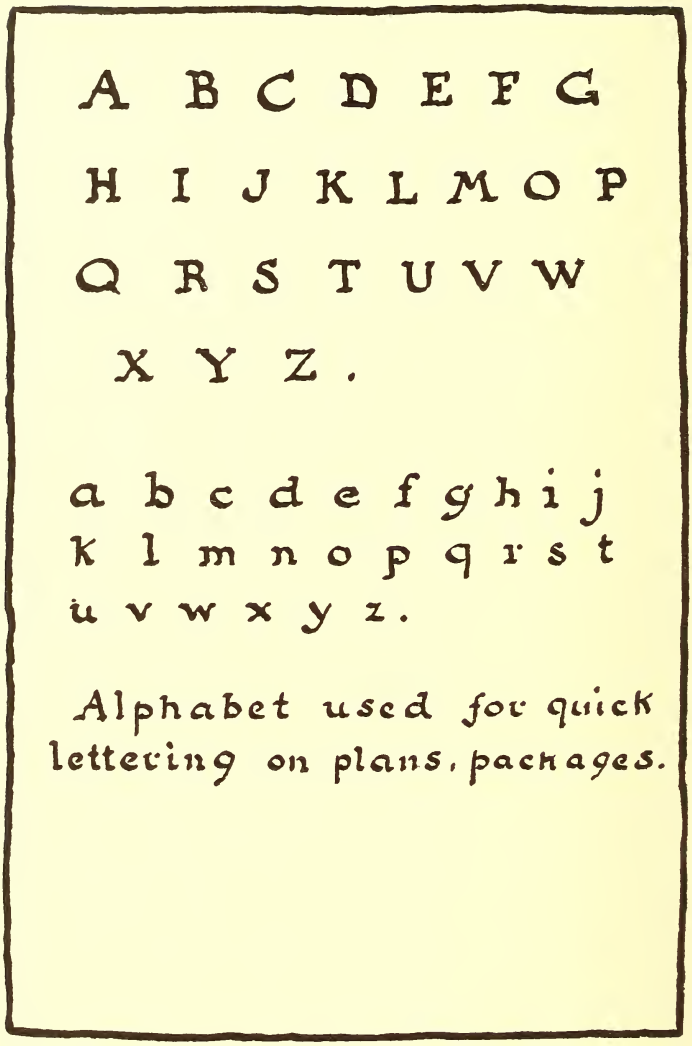
Such tendencies as these, if allowed to develop slowly and naturally, are certain to evolve new forms — a process of modification which it should be fully as instructive and entertaining to observe as any of the historical changes that have already become incorporated into our present letter shapes.



138. MODERN AMERICAN LETTERS, FOR RAPID USE F. C. B.



139. MODERN AMERICAN ITALIC, FOR PLANS, ETC. C. F. BRAGDON



140. MODERN AMERICAN LETTERS MAXFIELD PARRISH

CHAPTER III

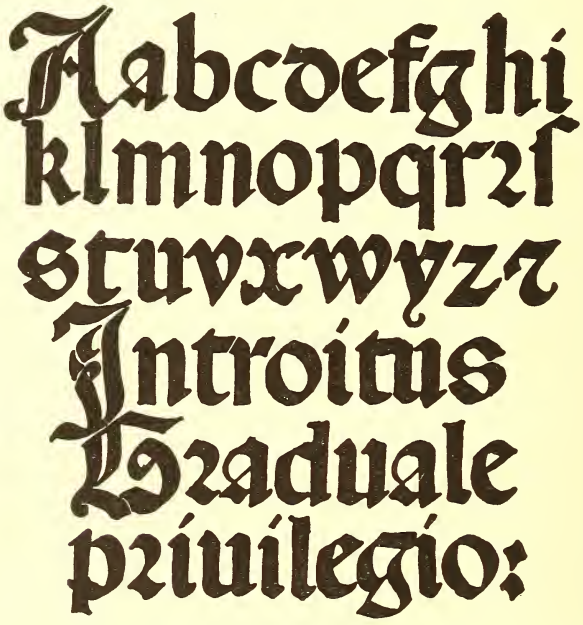
GOTHIC LETTERS

The name "Gothic" applies rather to the spirit than to the exact letter forms of the style. The same spirit of freedom and restlessness characterises the architecture of the period wherein this style of letter was developed; and Gothic letters are in many ways akin to the fundamental forms of Gothic architecture. Their effect is often tiring and confusing to the eye because of the constant recurrence of very similar forms with different letter meanings; yet this very similarity is the main cause of the pleasing aspect of a page of Gothic lettering.

Unlike the Roman letters, which attained a complete and final development, Gothic letters never reached authoritative and definitive forms, any more than did Gothic architecture. Every individual Gothic letter has several quasi-authoritative shapes, and all of these variants may be accepted, as long as they display an intelligent conception of the spirit of the style as a whole. Because of this lack of finality, however, it is impossible to analyze each of the letter forms as we were able to do with the Roman alphabet in Chapter I; yet this very variability and variety constitute at once the peculiar beauty of Gothic and the great difficulty of so drawing it as to preserve its distinctive character.

Any letter of Gothic form is usually called either "Gothic" or "Blackletter" indiscriminately, but this use is inexact

and confusing. The term "Blackletter" should, strictly, be applied only to letters in which the amount of black in the line overbalances the white; and the proper application of the title should be determined rather by this balance or weight of the letter than by its form.

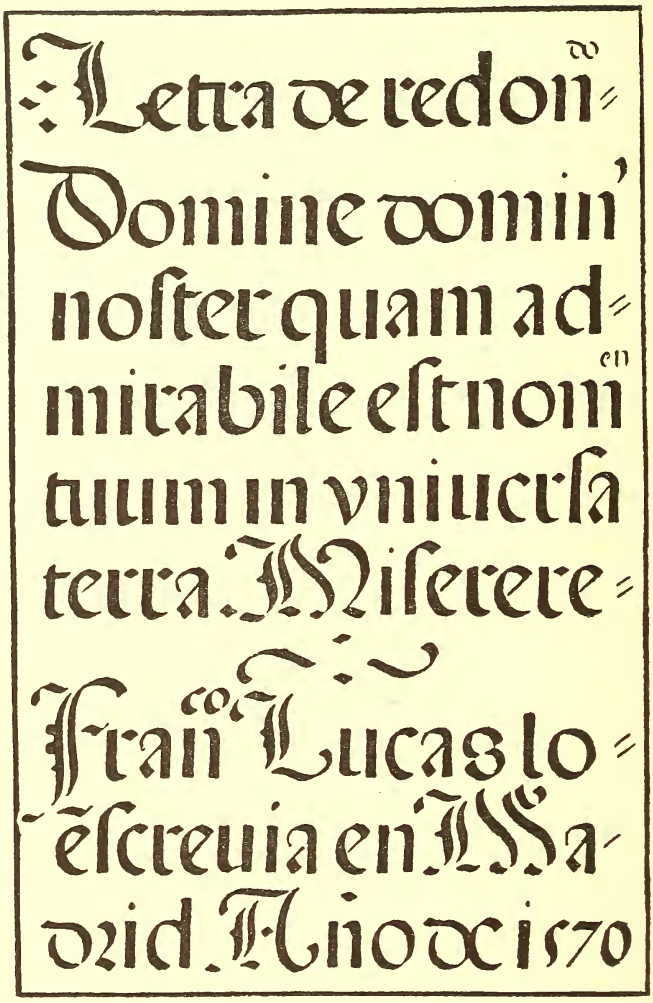


141. ITALIAN ROUND GOTHIC SMALL LETTERS 1500

The original Gothic letter was a gradual outgrowth from the round Roman Uncial. Its early forms retained all the roundness of its Uncial parent; but as the advantages of a condensed form of letter for the saving of space became manifest, (parchment was expensive and bulky) and the



142. ITALIAN ROUND GOTHIC SMALL LETTERS 16th CENTURY



143. SPANISH ROUND GOTHIC LETTERS FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577

beauty of the resulting blacker page was noticed, the round Gothic forms were written closer and narrower, the ascenders and descenders were shortened, with marked loss of legibilty, that the lines of lettering might be brought closer together, until a form was evolved in which the black overbalanced the white — the Blackletter which still survives in the common German text of to-day. Thus, though a Gothic letter may not be a Blackletter, a Blackletter is *always* Gothic, because it is constructed upon Gothic lines. On the other hand, a Roman Blackletter would be an obvious impossibility. The very essential and fundamental quality of a Roman letter lies in the squareness or circularity of its skeleton form.

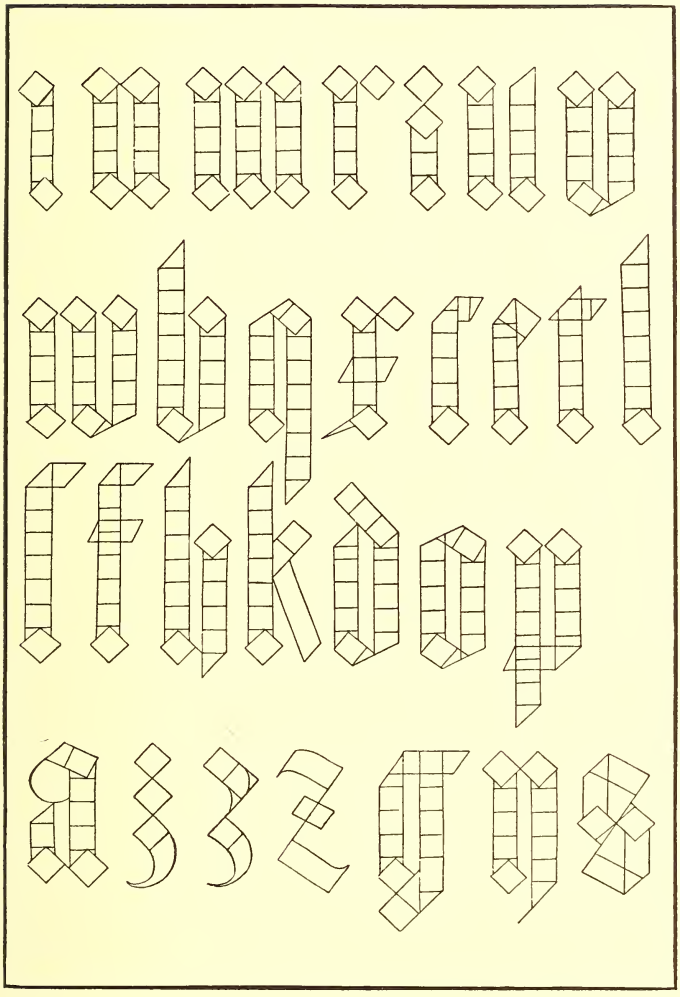
For clearness and convenience, then, the following discrimination between the terms Gothic and Blackletter will be adopted in this treatise: When a letter is Gothic but not a Blackletter it will be called "Round Gothic"; when it is primarily a Blackletter it will be termed "Blackletter," the latter name being restricted to such compressed, narrow or angular forms as the small letters shown in 144, 147 and 148. The name "Round Gothic" will be applied only to the earlier forms, such as those shown in 141 and 142. Such a distinction has not, I believe, hitherto been attempted; but the confusion which otherwise results makes the discrimination seem advisable.

The three pages of examples, figures 141, 142 and 143, exhibit the characteristic forms and standard variations of the Round Gothic. In lieu of any detailed analysis of these letter shapes, it may perhaps be sufficient to say that they were wholly and exactly determined by the position of the quill, which was held rigidly upright, after the fashion

already described in speaking of Roman lettering; and that the letters were always formed with a round swinging motion of hand and arm, as their forms and accented lines clearly evidence; for the medieval scribes used the Round Gothic as an easy and legible handwritten form, and linked many of the letters.

Figures 158, 170, 172 and 173 show some capitals adapted for use with these Round Gothic letters; but the beginner should be extremely wary of attempting to use any Gothic capitals alone to form words, as their outlines are not suited for inter-juxtaposition. Occasionally they may thus be used, and used effectively, as is shown, for instance, in the beautiful page of lettering by Mr. Edwin A. Abbey, 153; but so successful a solution is rare, and implies an intimate knowledge of the historic examples and use of Gothic lettering.

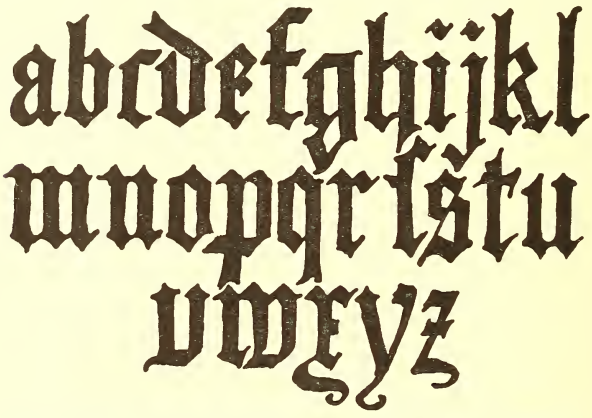
The late Gothic or Blackletter is condensed and narrowed in the extreme. No circles are employed in the construction of the small letters, which have angular and generally acute corners. As in all pen-drawn letters, the broad lines are made on the down right-sloping strokes, and the narrow lines are at right angles to these. Blackletter shapes, like those of the Round Gothic, cannot, as has been said, be defined by any set of general rules; the intrinsic quality of all Gothic letters almost demands a certain freedom of treatment that would transgress any laws that could be formulated. Indeed the individual forms should always be subservient to the effect of the line or page. Observe in almost every example shown how the form of the same letter constantly varies in some minor detail. The drawing by Albrecht Dürer, reproduced in 144, will,



144. GERMAN BLACKLETTER CONSTRUCTION ALBRECHT DÜRER

however, serve to show the construction of an excellent Blackletter, which may fairly be considered as typical.

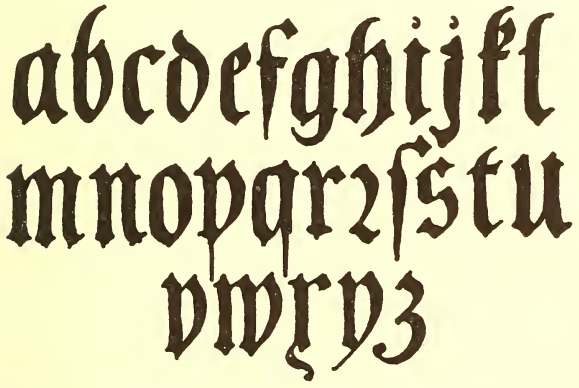
The first essential of a good Blackletter line or page is that it shall be of a uniform color. Unlike the Roman, the Blackletter form does not permit that one word be wider spaced than others in the same panel. The amount of white left between the several letters should be as nearly as



145. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS FROM MANUSCRIPTS

possible the same throughout, approximately the same as the space between the perpendicular strokes of the minuscule letters themselves. Usually, the less the white space the better will be the general effect of the page, for its beauty depends much upon a general blackness of aspect;—and let it be noted in passing that, for this reason, it is doubly difficult to judge of the final effect of a Blackletter page from any outlined pencil sketch. Even in the cases of those capital letters that extend both above and below the guide lines it will be found possible to so adjust the spaces

and blacks as not to interrupt the general uniformity of color, and it is sometimes advisable to fill awkward blanks by flourishes; although flourishing, even in Blackletter, is an amusement that should be indulged in cautiously. As a general rule the more solidly black a panel of Blackletter is the better (a principle too often disregarded in the modern use of the form); though on the other hand,



146. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS WITH ROUNDED ANGLES

the less legible the individual letters will become. The designer should therefore endeavor to steer a middle course, making his panel as black as he can without rendering the individual letters illegible.

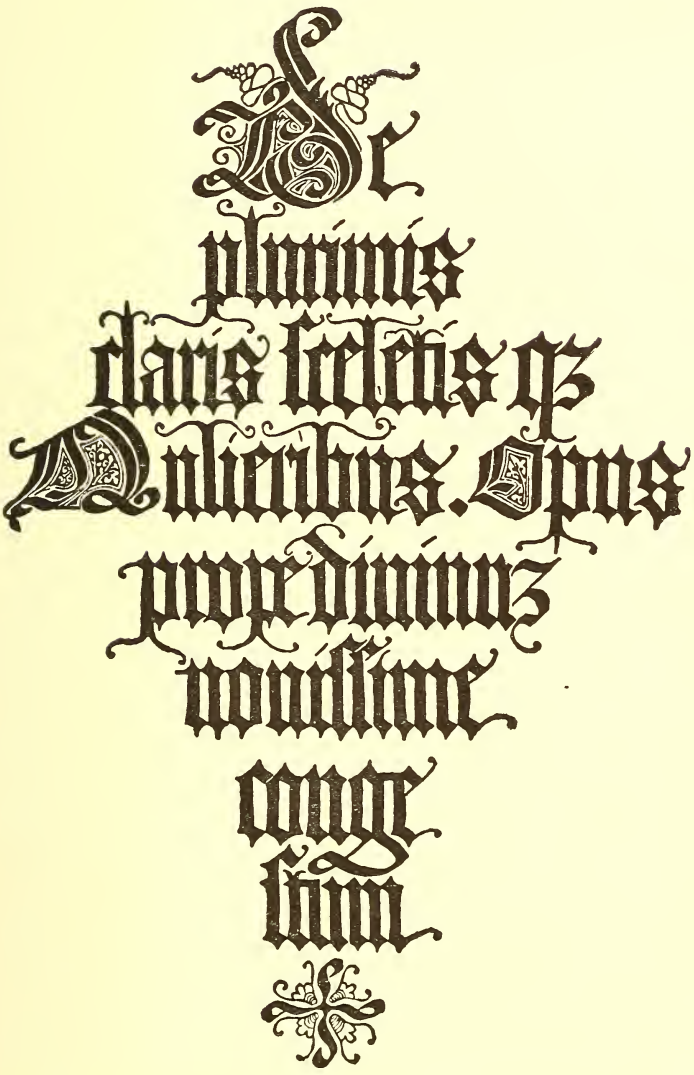
No style permits more of liberty in the treatment of its separate letter forms than the Blackletter. The same letter may require a different outline at the beginning of a word than in the middle or at the end. The ascenders and descenders may be drawn so short as hardly to transcend the guide lines of the minuscules, or may grow into flour-

ishes up and down, to the right or to the left, to fill awkward blanks. Indeed so variable are these forms that in ancient examples it is often difficult to recognize an individual letter apart from its context.

The two pages drawn by Mr. Goodhue, 188 and 189, deserve careful study as examples of modern use of the Blackletter. It will be observed that almost as many variants of each letter are employed as the number used would permit, thus giving the panel variety and preventing any appearance of monotony or rigidity. Notice the freedom and variety of the swash lines in the capitals, and yet that each version is quite as graceful, logical and original as any of its variants.

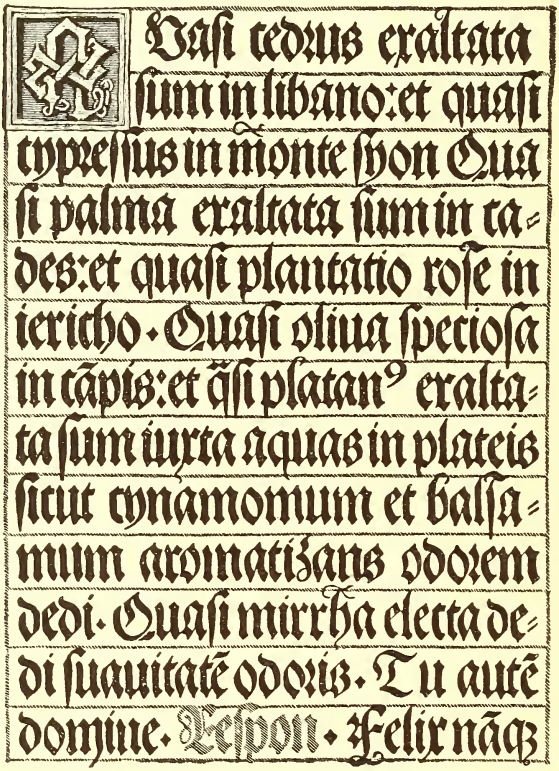
The examples of old lettering reproduced in figures 147, 148 and 149, together with the drawings by Mr. Goodhue, will indicate the proper spacing of Blackletter; but in most of the pages here devoted to illustrating the individual forms the letters have been spaced too wide for their proper effect that each separate shape might be shown distinctly. The style appears at its best in compositions which fill a panel of more or less geometrical form, as, for example, the beautiful title-page reproduced in 147. Could anything be more delightful to the eye than its rich blackness, energetic lines, and refreshing virility? In this design surely we have a specimen that, from the proportion and balance of its blacks, is more effective than anything which could have been accomplished by the use of the more rigid Roman letter; but despite its many beauties it suffers from the inherent weakness of the individual letter forms,—it is more effective than readable!

Another excellent example of the old use of Blackletter is the page from the prayerbook of the Emperor Maximilian,



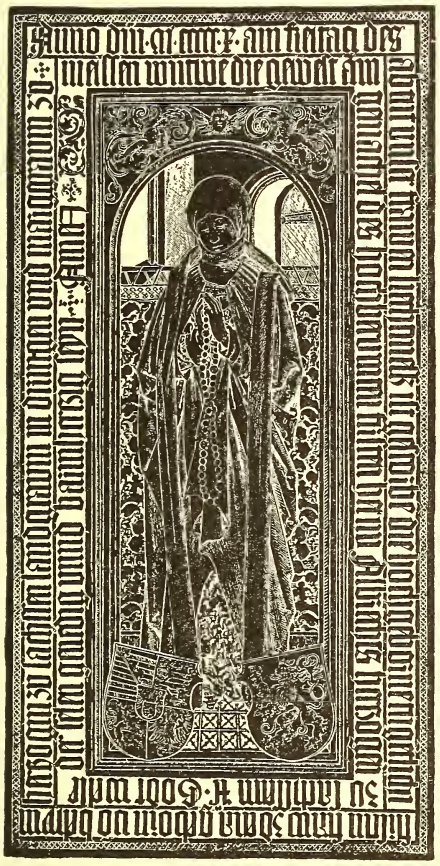
147. ITALIAN BLACKLETTER TITLE-PAGE JACOPUS FORESTI, 1497

shown in 148, in which observe again the variety of the individual letter forms. Figure 149 shows the use of a Blackletter on an admirable monumental brass, which is



148. GERMAN BLACKLETTER PAGE ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1515

reputed to have been designed by Albrecht Dürer. A similar Blackletter form, also from a brass, is shown at larger scale in 186.



149. GERMAN MEMORIAL BRASS MEISSEN, 1510

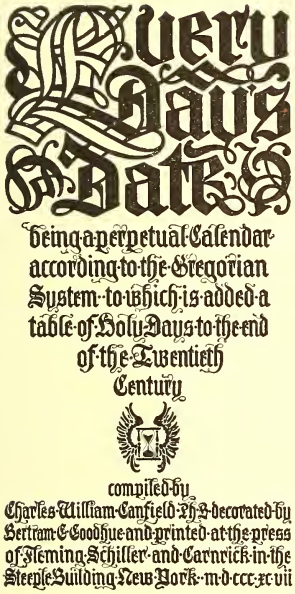
Any of the minuscule forms of Blackletter which have been illustrated may be used with the Gothic capitals of figures 164-5, 166, 177, 179, 185, 188-9; or with such Uncial capitals as are illustrated in 155 to 162; care being taken, of course, that these capitals are made to agree in style and weight with the small letters chosen. Although Uncial capitals are historically more closely allied with the Round Gothic, we have abundant precedent for their use with the minuscule Blackletter in many of the best medieval specimens.

When the Gothic Uncial capitals were cut in stone and marble there was naturally a corresponding change in character, as is shown in the Italian examples illustrated in 160

and 161. These examples, which are reproduced from rubbings, exhibit the characteristic stone cut forms very clearly. A Gothic Uncial alphabet redrawn from a German brass is illustrated in 162. The group of specimens from 154 to 159 exhibit the chronological growth of the Uncial capitals, which were used, as has been said, with the various small Blackletter forms, though they were also used alone to form words, as is shown in 160. The historical progression in these Uncial examples is most interesting; and, allowing for the variations of national temperament, traces itself connectedly enough. Figures 154 to 159 are pen forms, while 160 to 163 are from stone or metal-cut letters.

Figures 164 to 166 show alphabets of Gothic pen-drawn capitals that will serve as a basis for such adaptations as are shown in the modern examples 152 and 153. Figures 167 to 169 show a more elaborate but an excellent and typical variety of this form of capital, which is one of the most beautiful and distinctive of Gothic letters. Shorn of its fussy small lines the main skeleton is eminently virile; and, though extremely difficult to draw, it cannot be surpassed for certain limited uses. Figures 170 to 173 exhibit a group of Gothic capitals more or less allied in character and all pen letters. Figures 174 to 176 show forms similar to those of the previous group, but adapted for use in various materials.

Figures 177 to 179 show some English Gothic letters, the last being that employed so effectively in the pen-drawn page by Mr. Abbey, 153. Figures 180 to 184 illustrate various forms of Blackletter: 180 is from a German brass, 182 illustrates an Italian pen form, and 183 and 184 show



150. MODERN AMERICAN COVER IN BLACKLETTER B. G. GOODHUE

Blackletters drawn by Albrecht Dürer, the latter being the simplest and strongest variant in this style. It is the same letter that is employed to show Blackletter construction in diagram 144. Figure 185 shows the well-known and unusually beautiful initials designed by Dürer. Figure 186 is a Blackletter from an English brass, although the letter forms in this example, as well as those of many other English brasses, may perhaps have been derived from Flanders, as many of the finest early Continental brasses were imported from the Netherlands.

The Italian forms of Gothic Blackletters are generally too fussy and finikin to be of practical value for modern use, though they often possess suggestive value. The letters shown in 182 are fairly typical of the characteristic Blackletter minuscules of Italy. Figure 187 exhibits an example of beautiful lettering in the Italian style, redrawn from a rubbing of an inlaid floor-slab in Santa Croce, Florence. The omission of capitals in long, confined lines is typical of many Blackletter inscriptions, as may be seen in 149, as well as in the plate just mentioned.

In view of the number of fine specimens of Blackletter which have been handed down to us, it has been deemed

unnecessary to reproduce many examples of its employment by modern draughtsmen. The pages by Mr. Goodhue, 188-9, have already been referred to; and figure 150



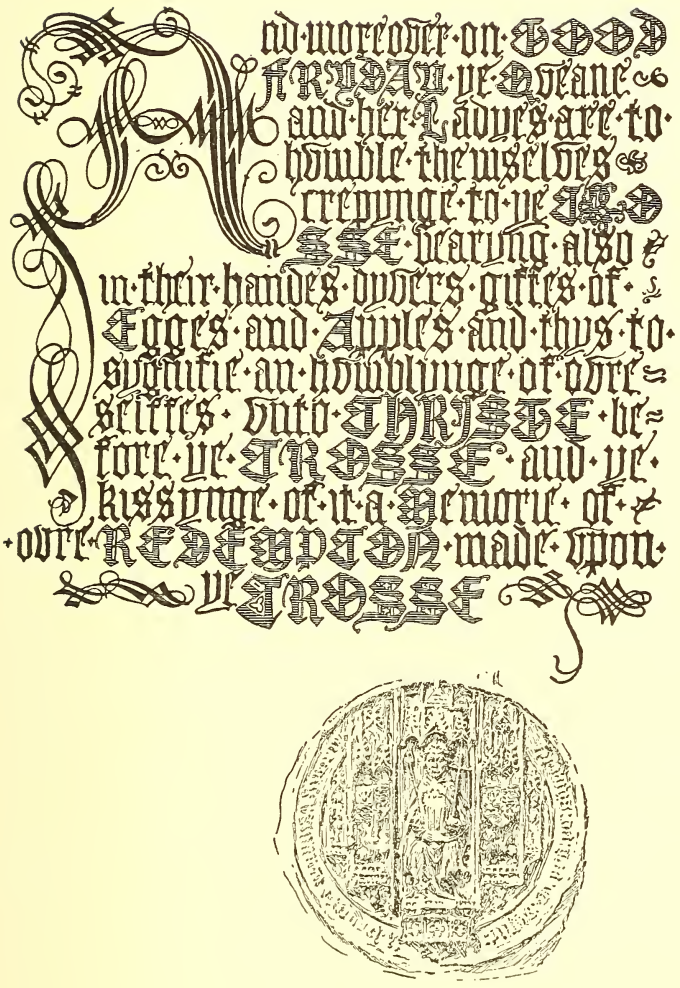
151. MODERN GERMAN BLACKLETTER WALTER PUTTNER

shows a very consistent and representative use of similar letter forms by the same designer. Figures 190 and 191 illustrate two modern varieties of Blackletter, one very



152. MODERN GERMAN BLACKLETTER OTTO HUPP

simple and the other very ornate. The small cuts, 151 and 152, show excellent modern Blackletters; the first, of unusually narrow form, being by Herr Walter Puttner, and the second, with its flourished initials, by Herr Otto Hupp.



153. MODERN BLACKLETTER EDWIN A. ABBEY



154. UNCIAL GOTHIC INITIALS 12th CENTURY. F. C. B.



155. UNCIAL GOTHIC INITIALS 13th CENTURY. F. C. B.



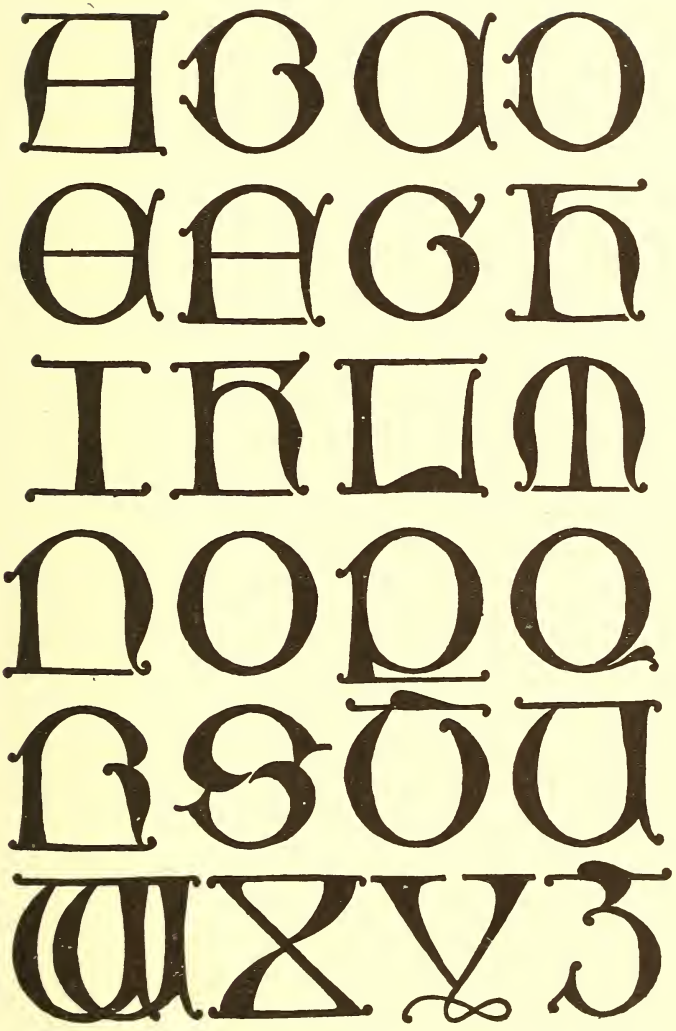
156. UNCIAL GOTHIC CAPITALS 14th CENTURY. F. C. B.



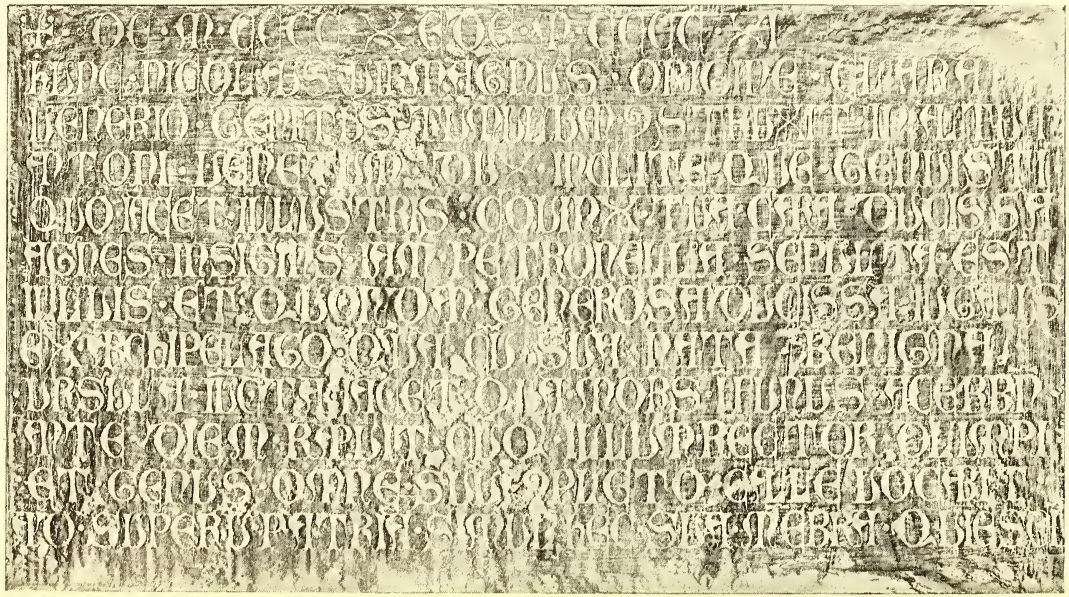
157. UNCIAL GOTHIC CAPITALS 14th CENTURY. F. C. B.



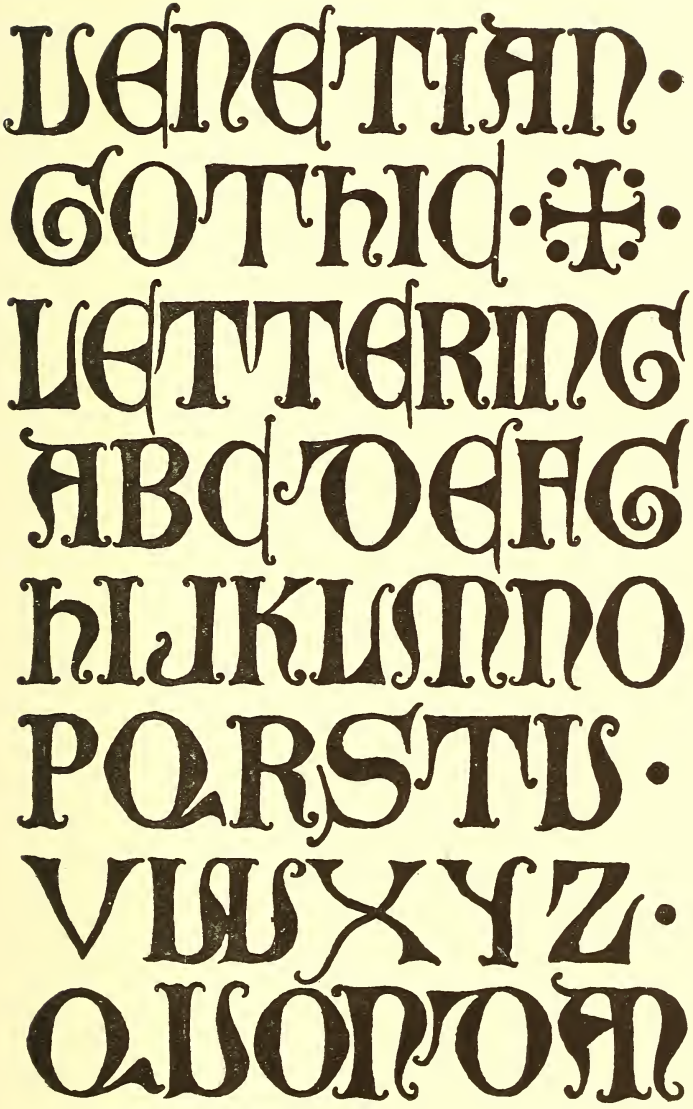
158. ITALIAN UNCIAL GOTHIC CAPITALS 14th CENTURY. F.C.B.



159. SPANISH UNCIAL GOTHIC CAPITALS JUAN DE YCIAR, 1550



160. VENETIAN WALL PANEL, 15th CENTURY FROM RUBBING



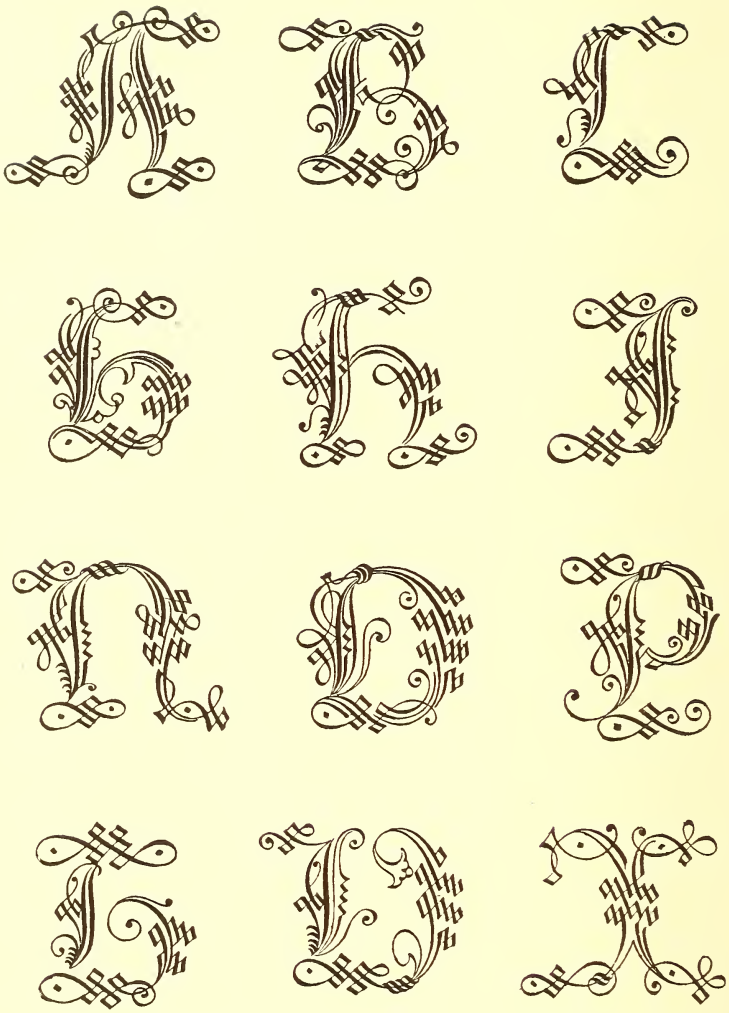
161. VENETIAN GOTHIC CAPITALS 15th CENTURY. F. C. B.



162. GERMAN UNCIAL CAPITALS, FROM A BRASS 14th CENTURY



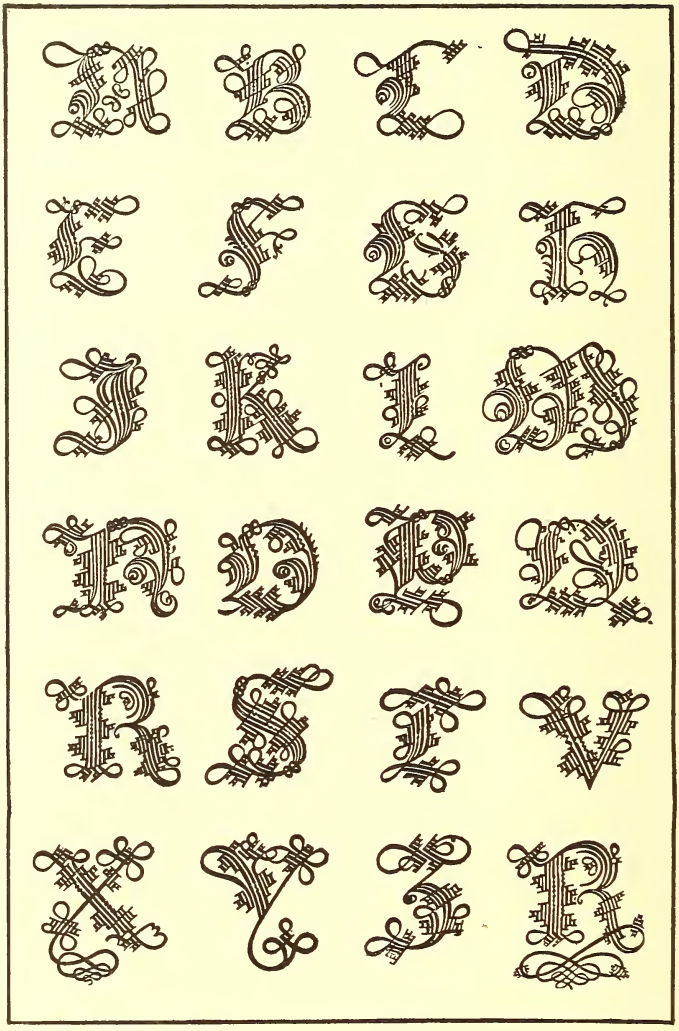
163. FRENCH AND SPANISH UNCIAL CAPITALS 14th CENTURY



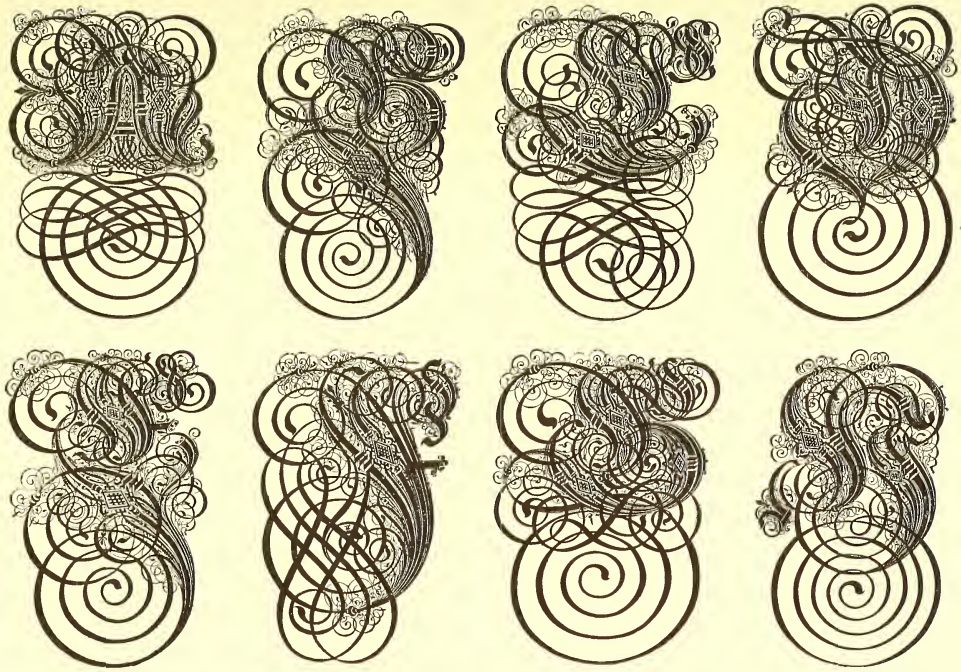
164. ITALIAN GOTHIC INITIALS G. A. TAGLIENTE, 16th CENTURY



165. ITALIAN GOTHIC INITIALS G. A. TAGLIENTE, 16th CENTURY

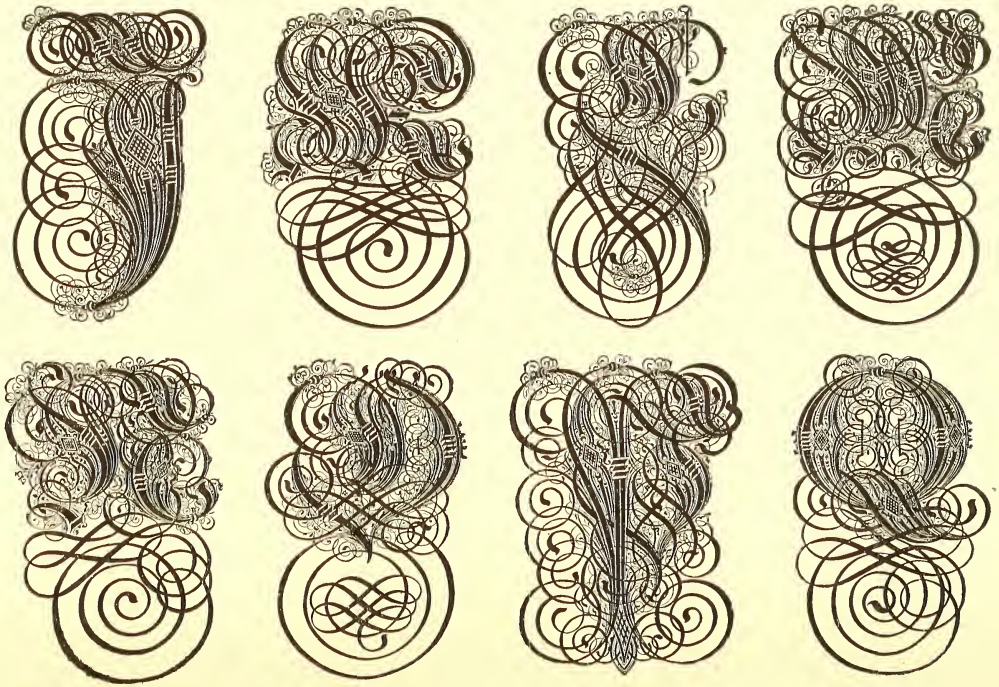


166. ITALIAN GOTHIC INITIALS GIOV. PALATINO, 16th CENTURY



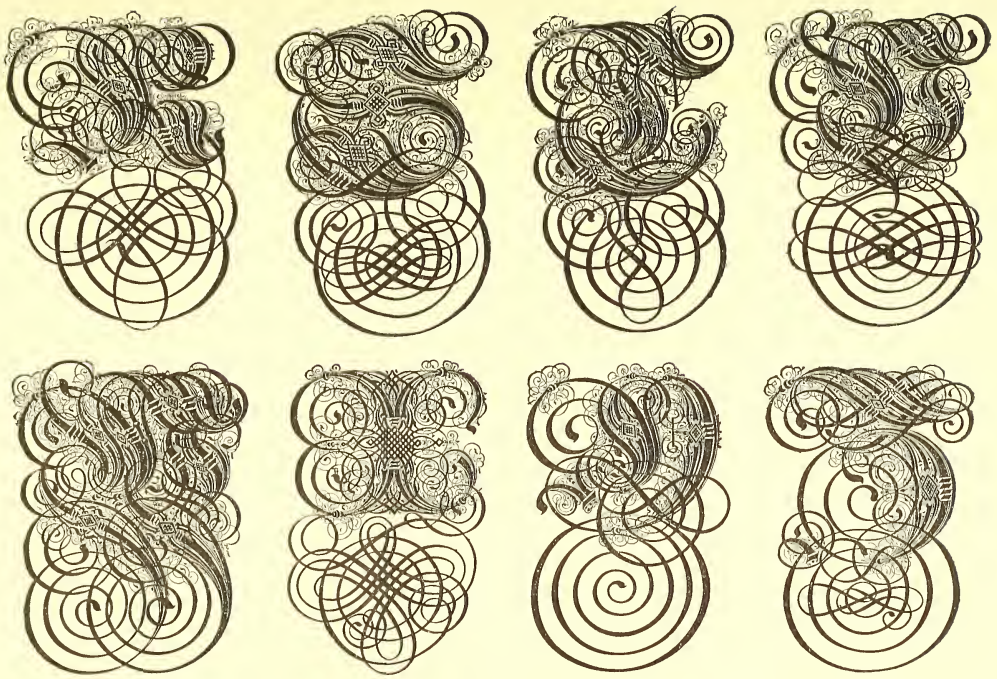
167. GERMAN GOTHIC INITIALS

P. FRANK, 1601



168. GERMAN GOTHIC INITIALS

P. FRANK, 1601

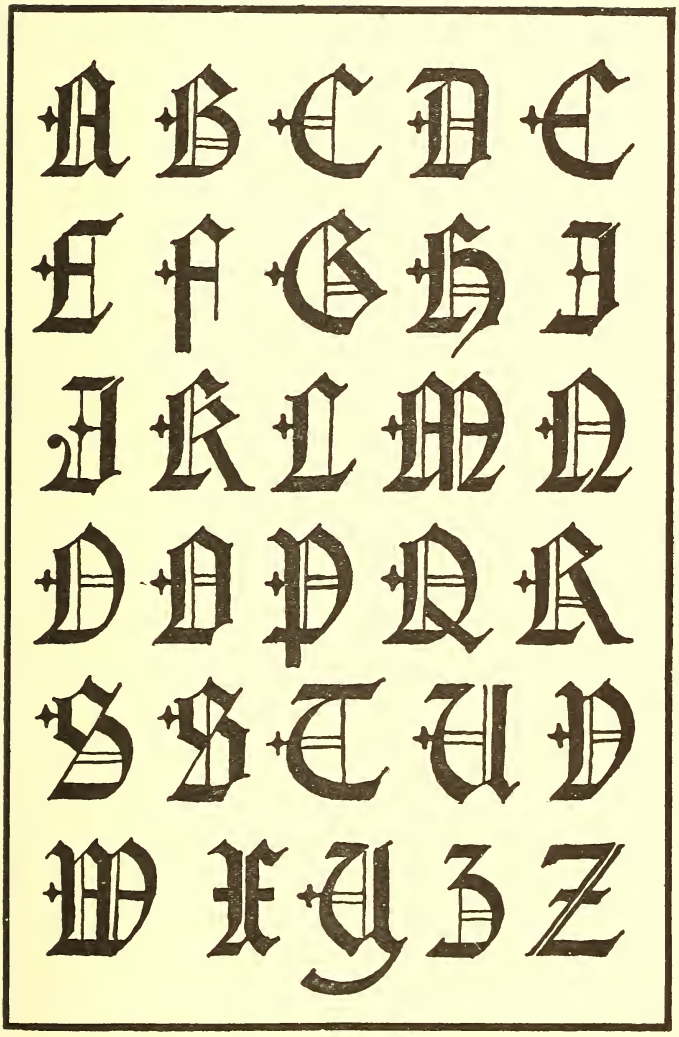


169. GERMAN GOTHIC INITIALS

P. FRANK, 1601



170. ITALIAN GOTHIC CAPITALS 16th CENTURY



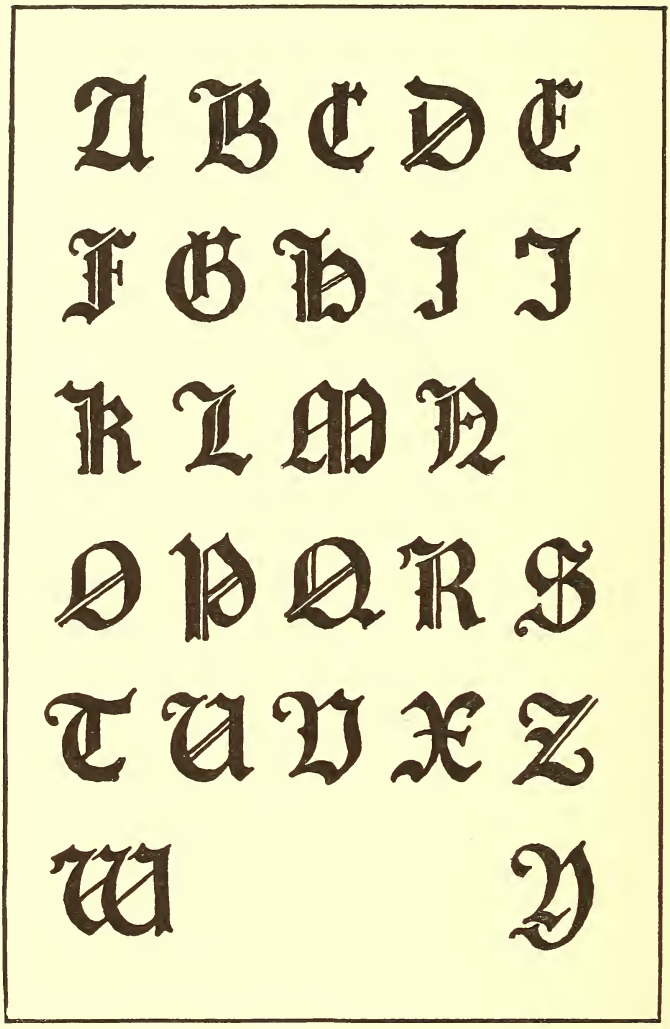
171. ENGLISH GOTHIC CAPITALS 16th CENTURY



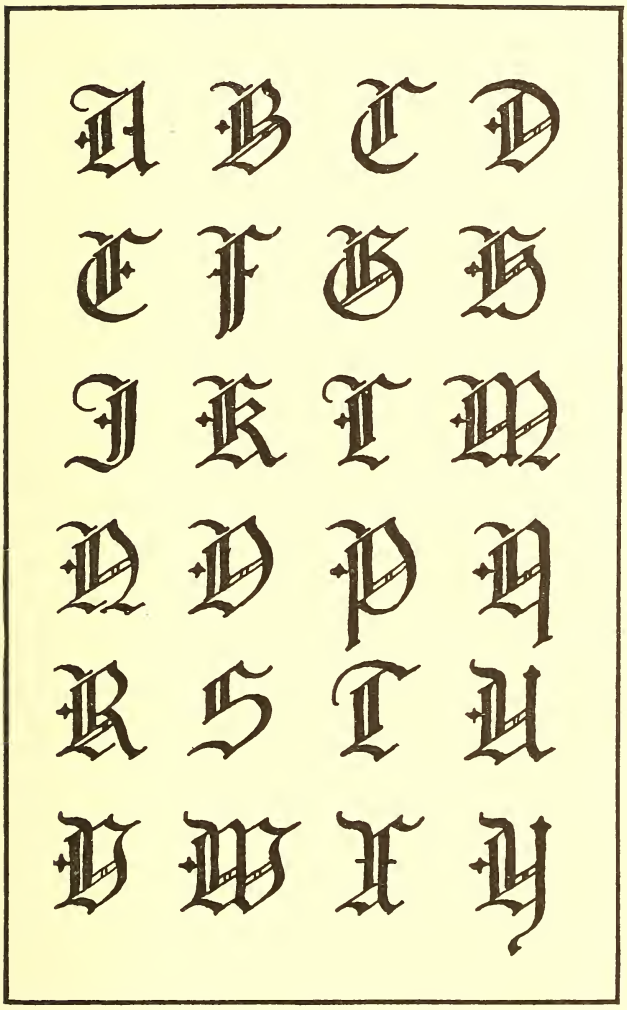
172. ITALIAN GOTHIC CAPITALS 17th CENTURY



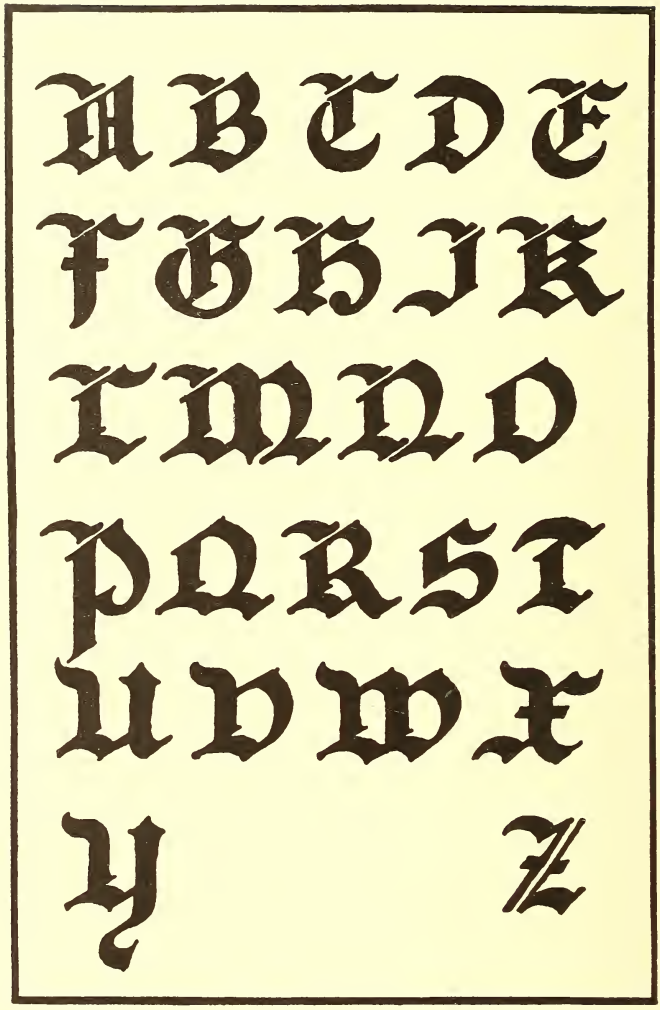
173. GERMAN GOTHIC CAPITALS 17th CENTURY



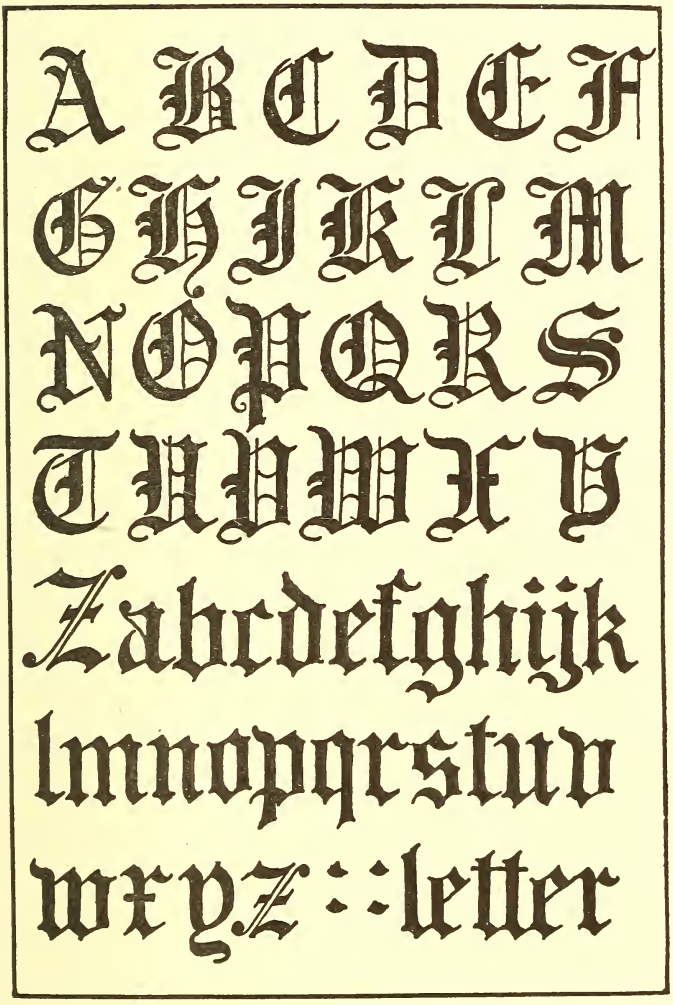
174. GERMAN GOTHIC CAPITALS FROM MANUSCRIPTS



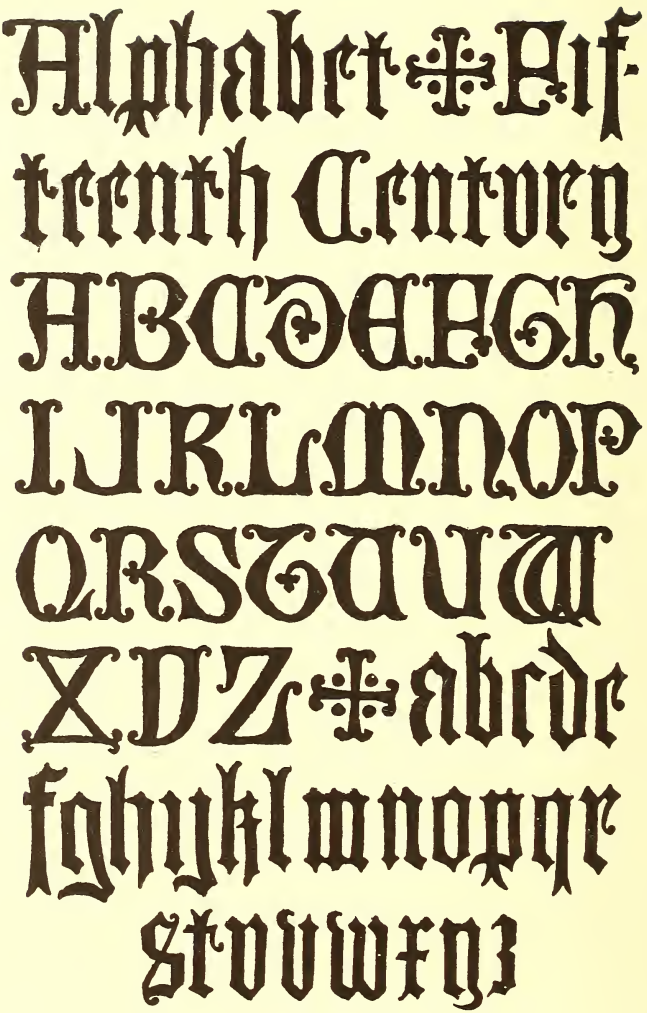
175. GERMAN GOTHIC CAPITALS FROM MANUSCRIPTS



176. GERMAN GOTHIC CAPITALS FROM MANUSCRIPTS



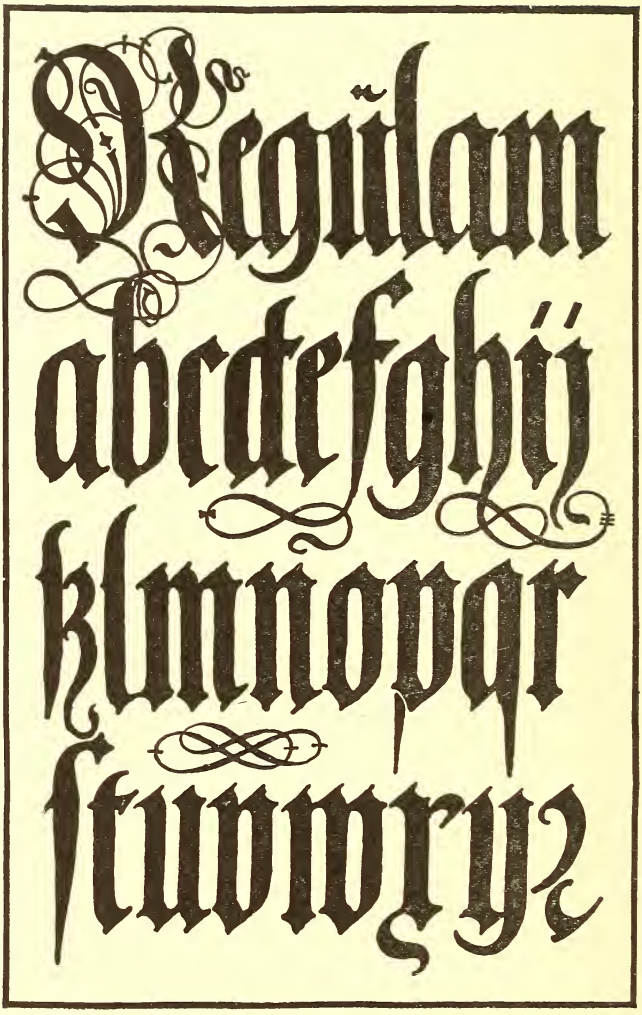
177. ENGLISH GOTHIC TEXT LETTERS FROM MANUSCRIPTS



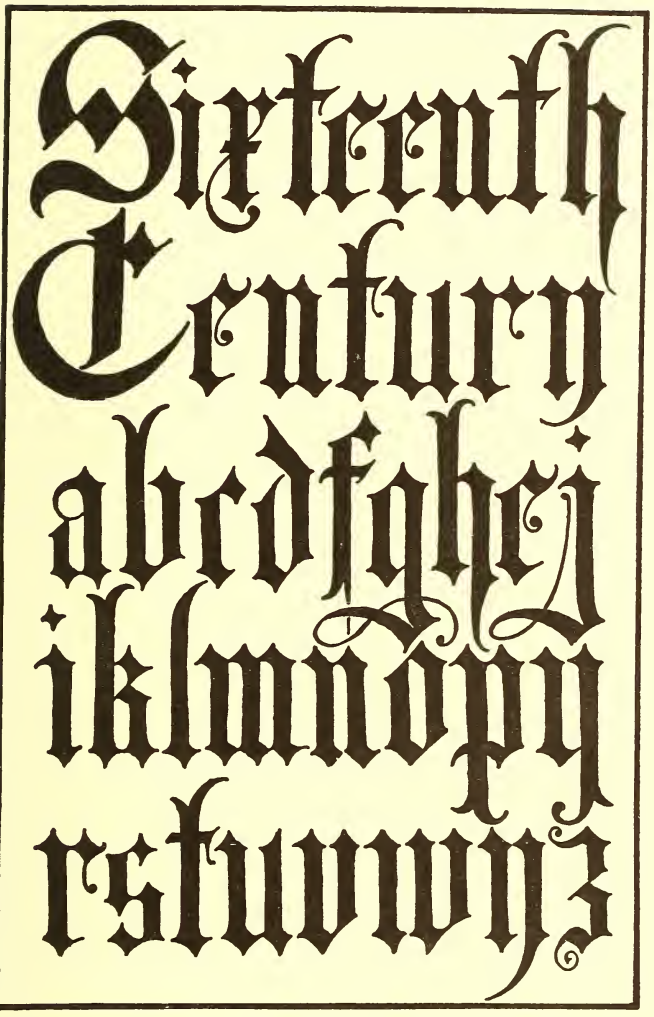
178. ENGLISH GOTHIC LETTERS 15th CENTURY. F. C. B.



179. ENGLISH GOTHIC LETTERS 15th CENTURY. F.C.B.



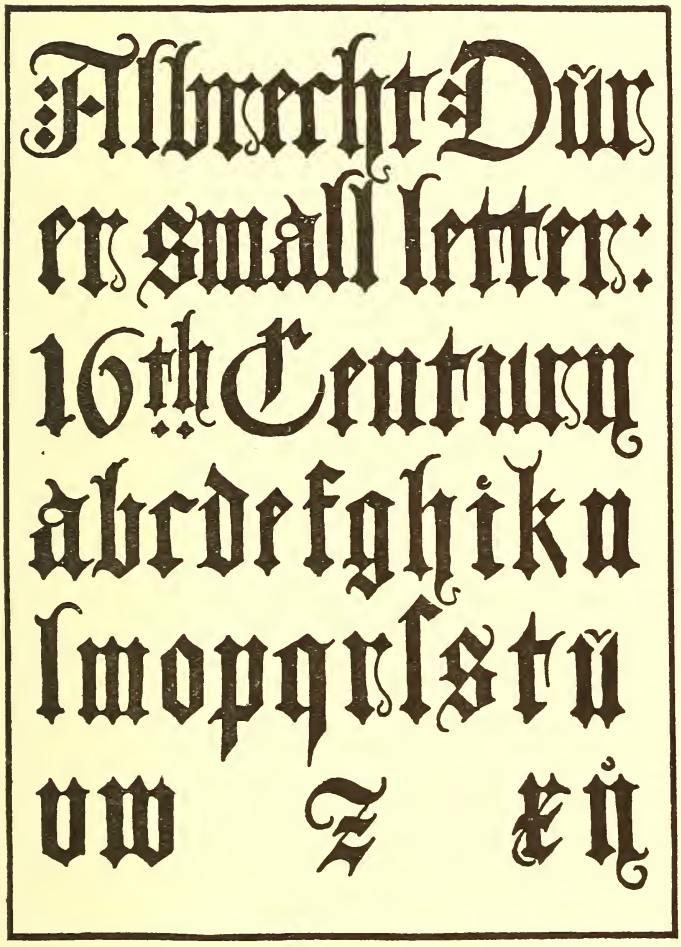
180. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS FROM A BRASS F. C. B.



181. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS 16th CENTURY. F.C.B.



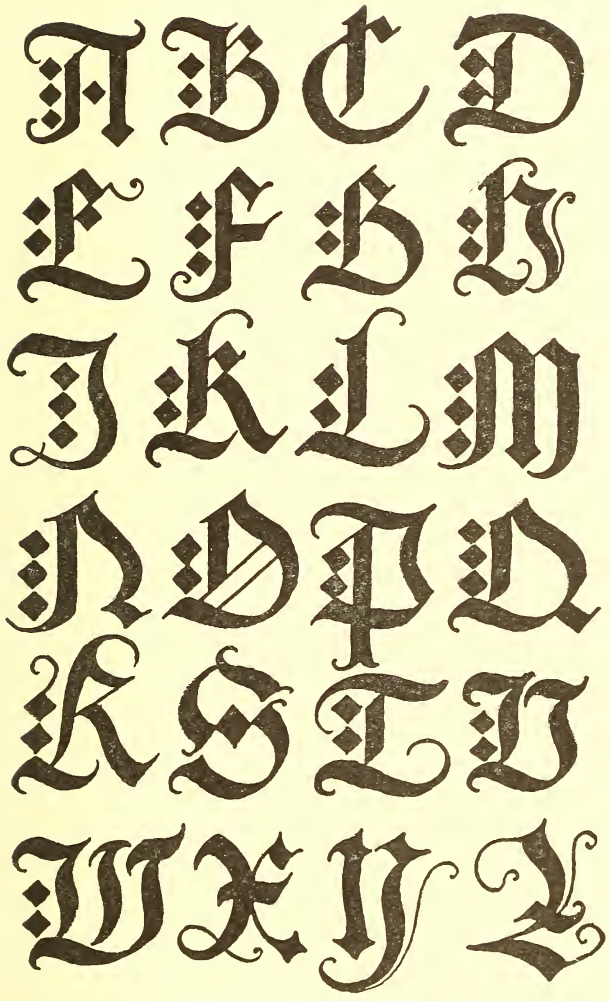
182. ITALIAN BLACKLETTERS G. A. TAGLIENTE, 16th CENTURY



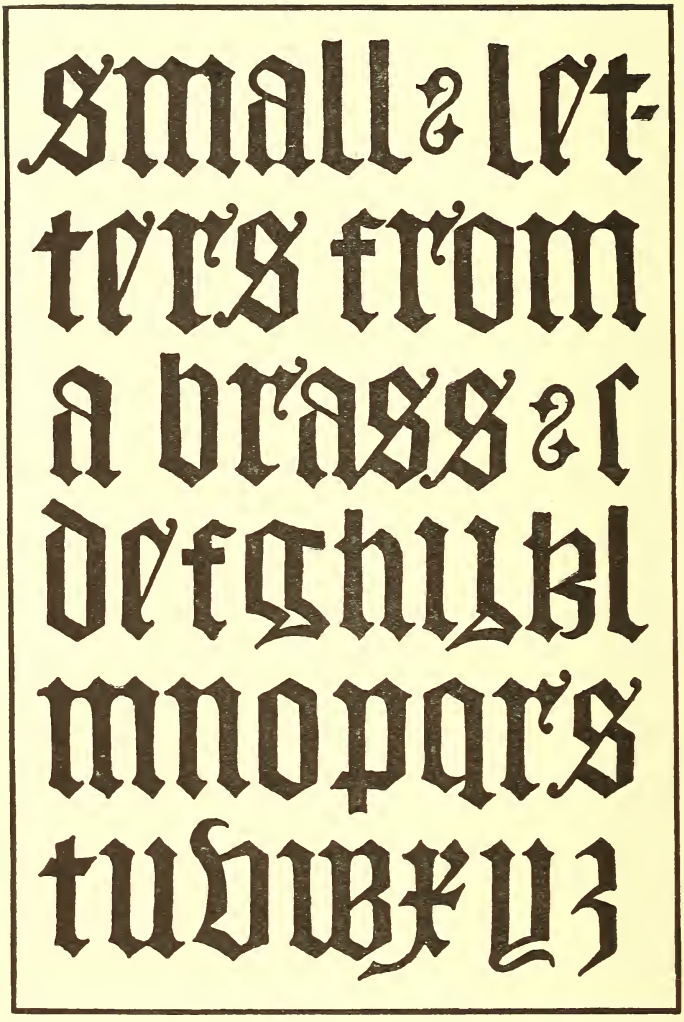
183. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS ALBRECHT DÜRER 16th CENTURY



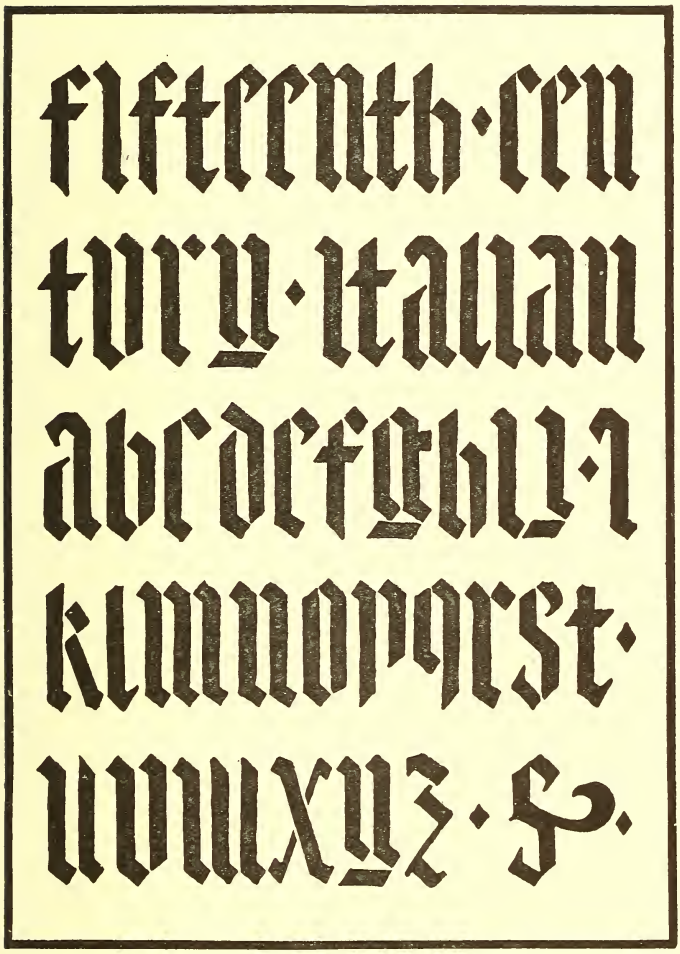
184. GERMAN BLACKLETTERS ALBRECHT DÜRER, 16th CENTURY



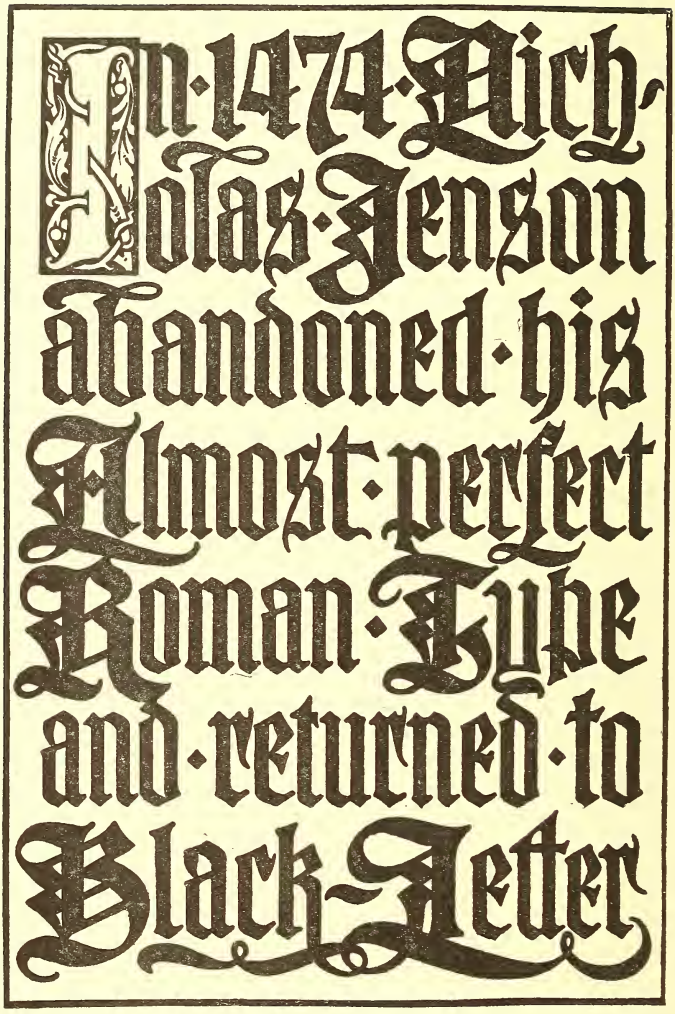
185. GERMAN GOTHIC CAPITALS ALBRECHT DÜRER, 16th CENTURY



186. ENGLISH GOTHIC BLACKLETTERS 15th CENTURY. F. C. B.



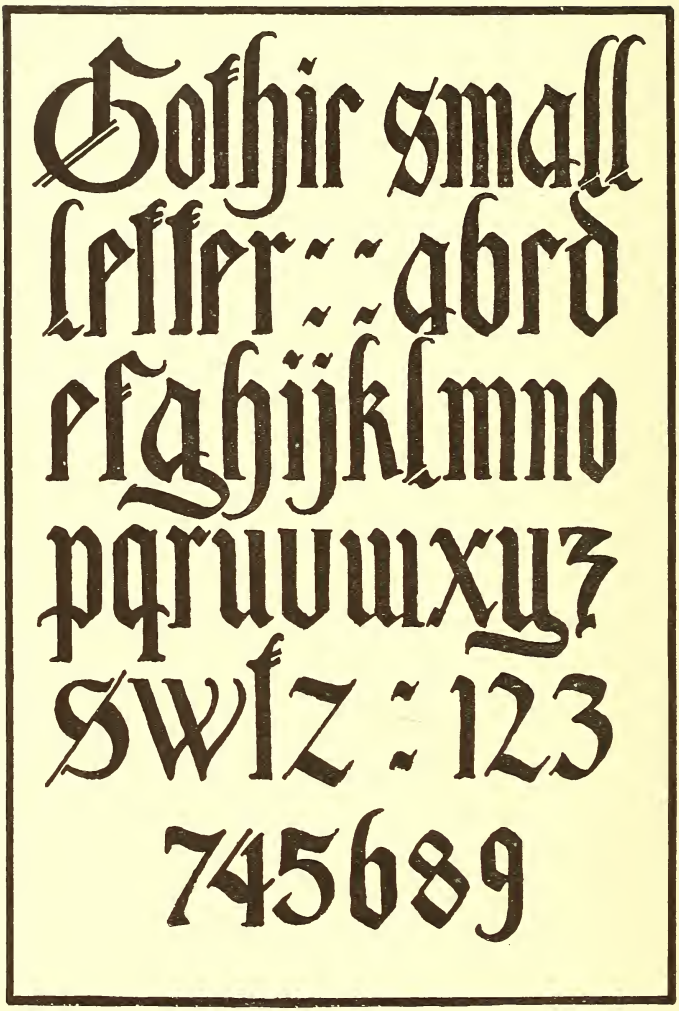
187. ITALIAN INLAID BLACKLETTERS FROM A RUBBING. F. C. B.



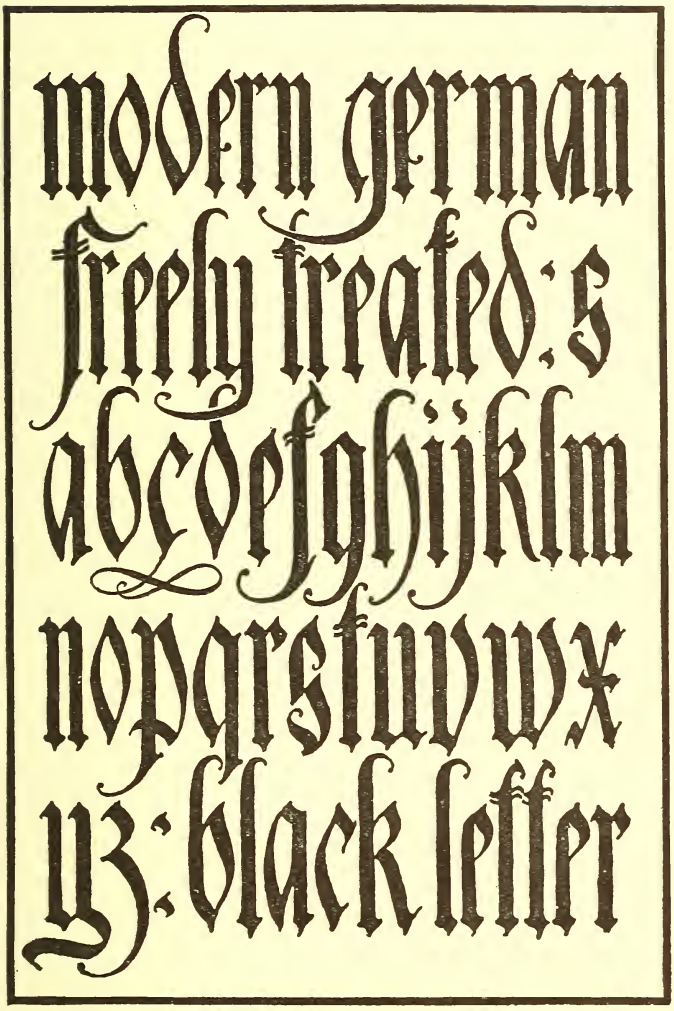
188. MODERN AMERICAN BLACKLETTERS B. G. GOODHUE



189. MODERN AMERICAN BLACKLETTERS B. G. GOODHUE



190. MODERN GERMAN BLACKLETTERS AFTER JULIUS DIEZ



191. MODERN GERMAN BLACKLETTERS, FLOURISHED F. C. B.

CHAPTER IV

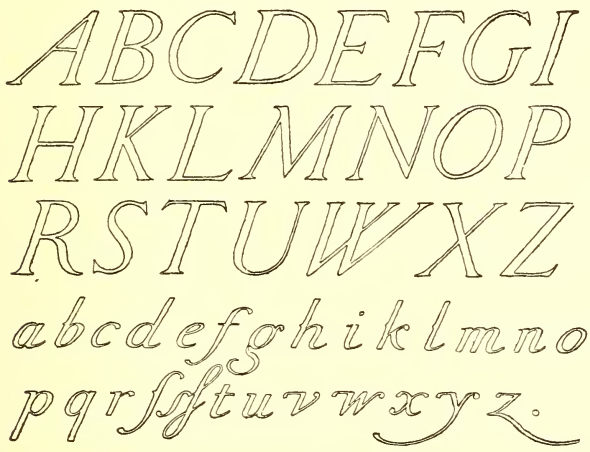
ITALIC AND SCRIPT

The regrettable modern neglect of those free and very interesting forms of the Roman letter, Italic and Script, seem to authorize consideration of them in a separate chapter, even at the risk of appearing to give them undue importance.

The first Italic type letter was derived, it is said, from the handwriting of Petrarch, and several admirable examples of the style, variously treated, have come down to us. As far as construction goes Italic is, theoretically, only the exact Roman form sloped, and with such changes as are necessitated by the sloping of the letters. Practically, however, it will be found that certain alterations in the outlines of the Roman letters must be made after giving them a slope in order to adapt them to their new requirements of interjuxtaposition; and, by a reflex action, when words in Italic capitals are used in the same panel with upright Roman letters, certain variations must be made in the latter, such as accenting the Roman O in the same fashion as the Italic *O* is accented, an altered treatment of serifs, and other changes in detail.

The Script form of letter was developed out of the running or writing hand, and still retains a cursive tendency in the linking together of its letters; although in some forms it so closely approximates to Italic as to be almost

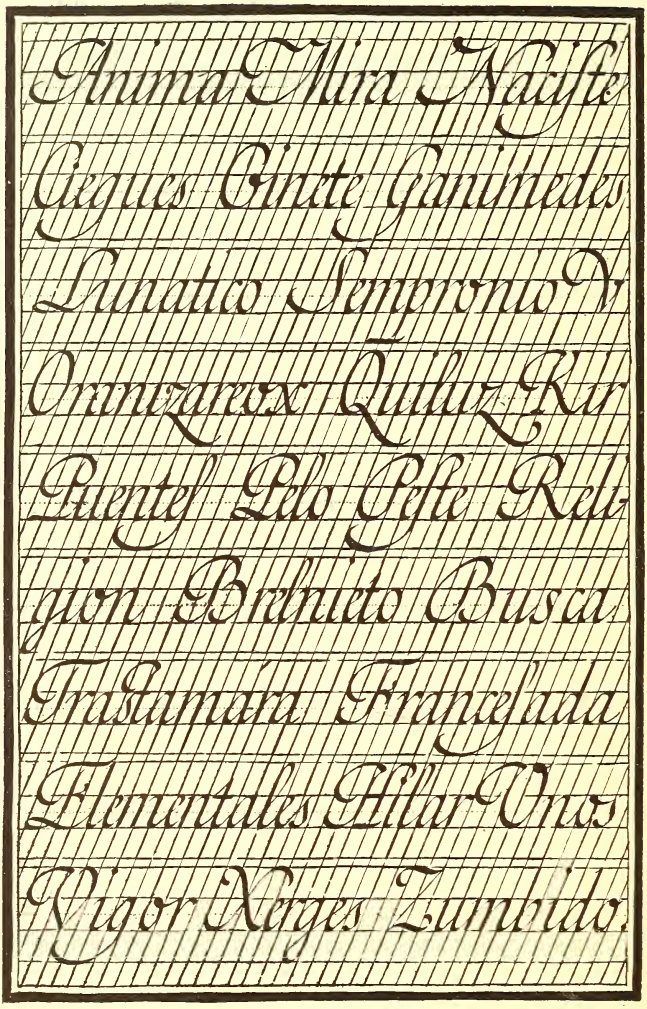
indistinguishable from it. Script lettering came into its greatest vogue during the Georgian period in England and at the same time in France; and was extensively employed, usually in conjunction with the upright Roman, in carved panels of stone or wood, and in engraving. The Script



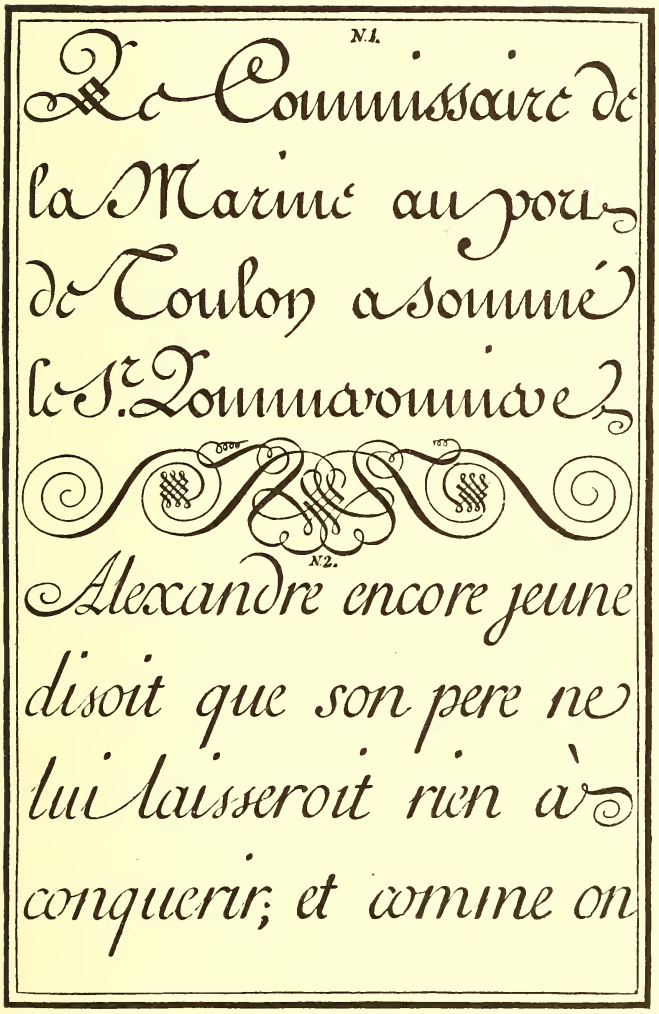
192. GERMAN ITALIC GOTTLIEB MUNCH, 1744

forms are well worthy of the attention of modern designers since they offer unusual opportunities for freedom and individuality of treatment; and because of this vitality and adaptility to modern uses the present chapter will be devoted largely to the illustration of Script examples.

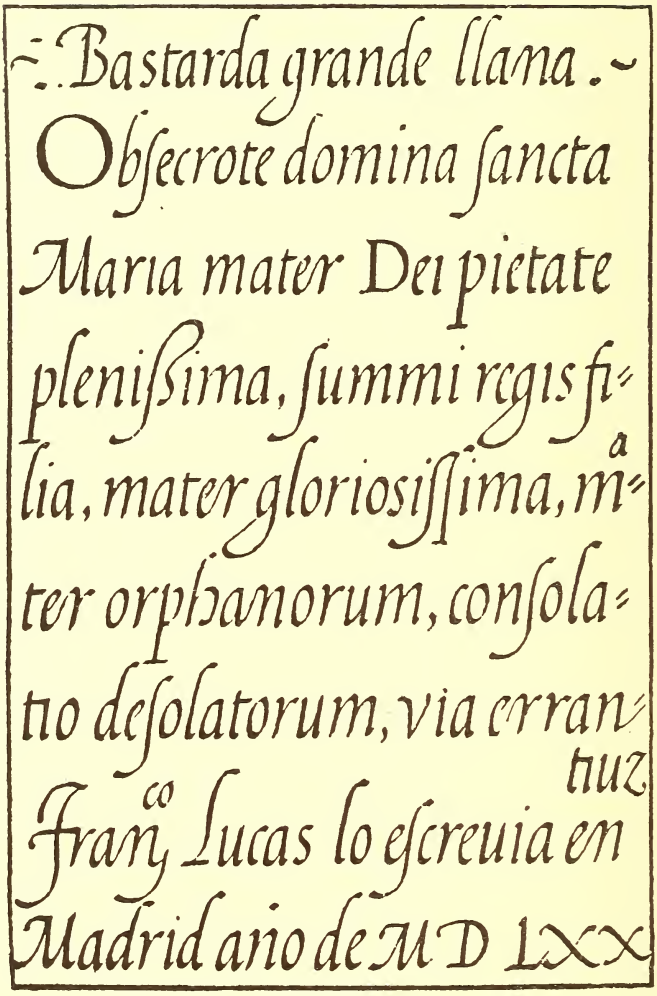
The old Spanish and Italian writing-books (referred to in a previous chapter), which in a measure took the place filled so much less artistically to-day by our modern school copy-books, contain many specimens of beautiful Script, both capitals and small letters. Figures 193 to 196 show pages from such books published in Spain.



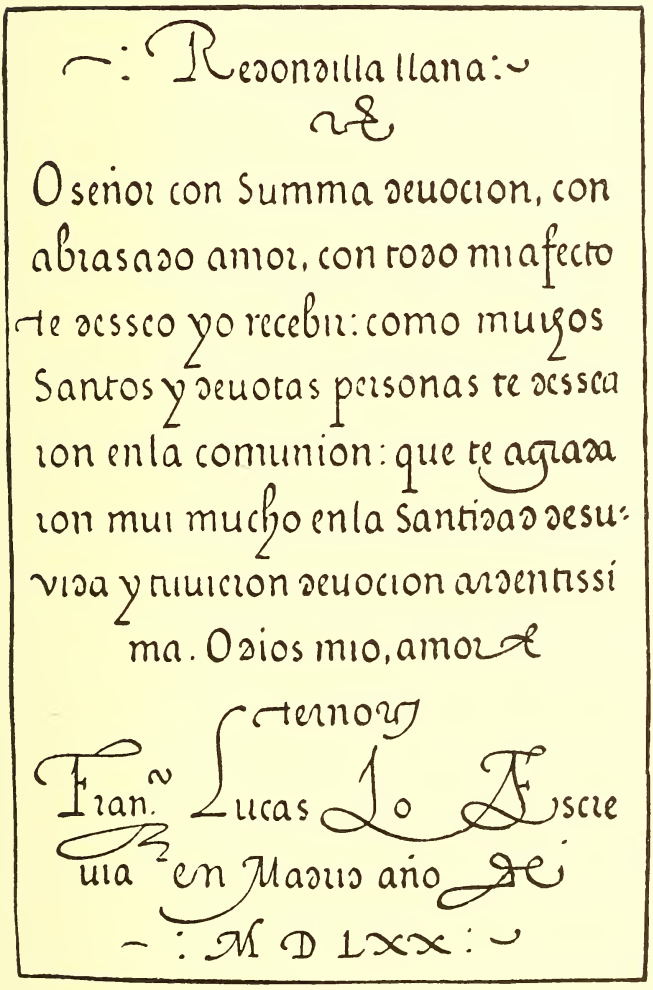
193. SPANISH SCRIPT TORQUATO TORIO, 1802



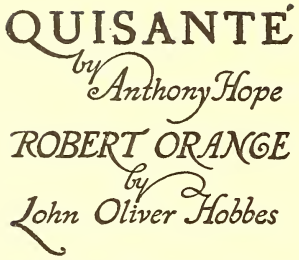
194. SPANISH SCRIPTS TORQUATO TORIO, 1802



195. SPANISH SCRIPT FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577



196. SPANISH CURSIVE FRANCISCO LUCAS, 1577



197. MODERN AMERICAN TITLES
CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON

A simple type of Spanish capital Script letter is shown in 201, while a corresponding small letter, redrawn from a Spanish source, is illustrated in 202. It should be noted in the latter figure that the three lower lines are further removed from the ordinary writing hand and are more interesting than the letters in the three upper lines.

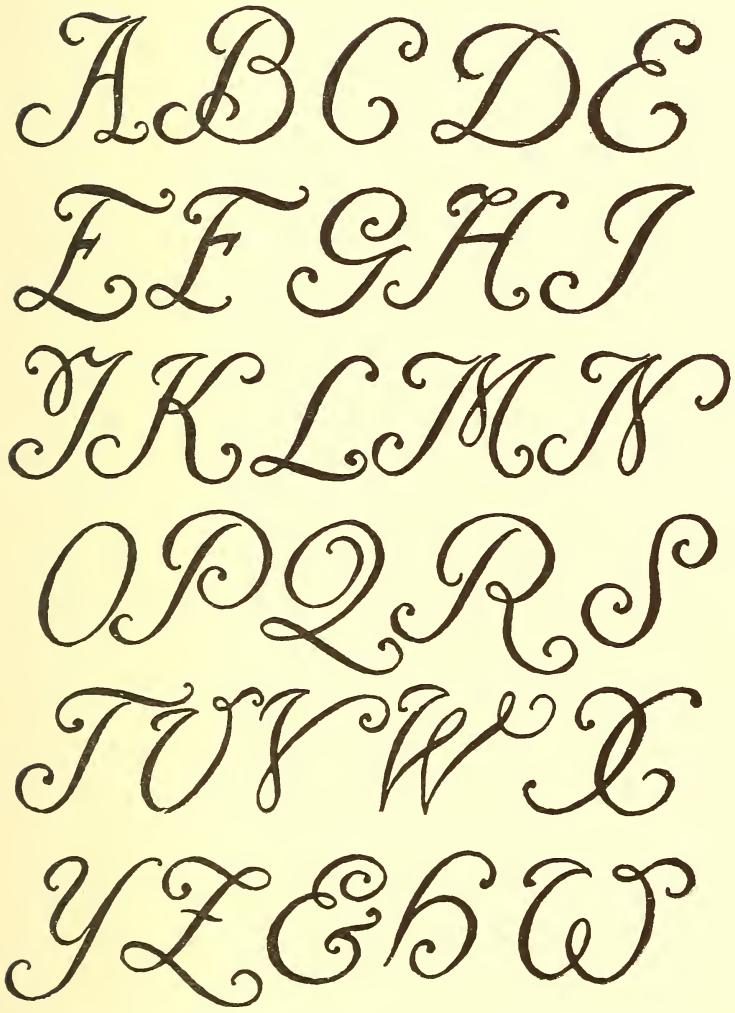
The French artists and engravers were, as has been said, among the first to appreciate the qualities of Script, and used it in many of their engraved title-pages, especially during the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI. Figure 199 shows a set of French Script capitals of the time of Louis XV., highly flourished but more formal than those shown in 201.

A form of Script very nearly allied to the Italic was frequently used for the lettering on headstones and wall tombs in the churches and churchyards of England. Figure 203, in which the lettering is taken from a tomb in Westminster Abbey, illustrates this style of Script.

A set of Script small letters with some unusual characteristics, adapted by Hrachowina from the German Renaissance form shown in outline in 192, is exhibited as a solid letter in figure 200.



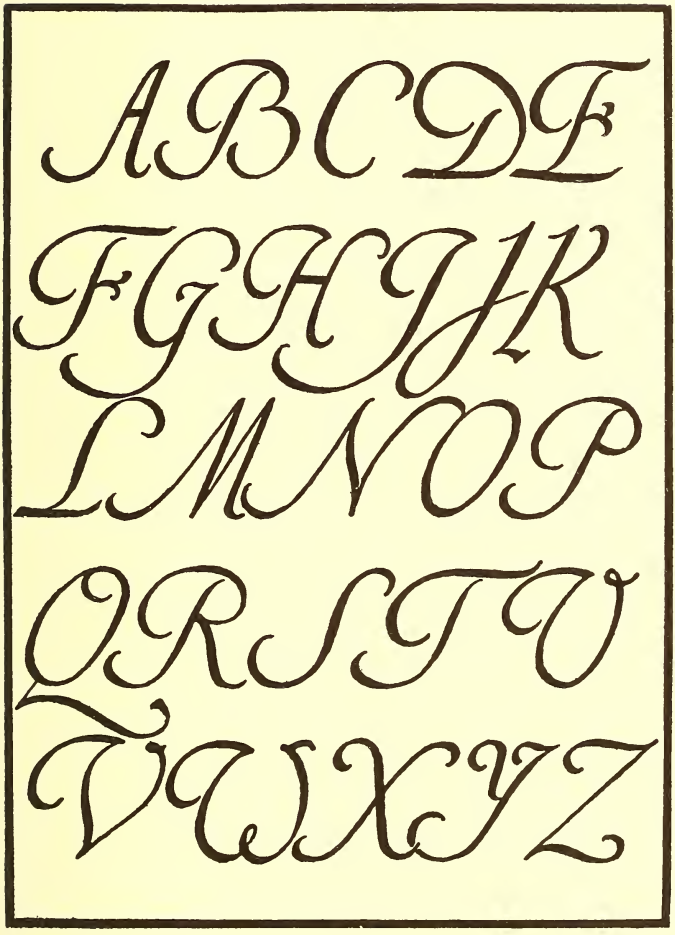
198. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS



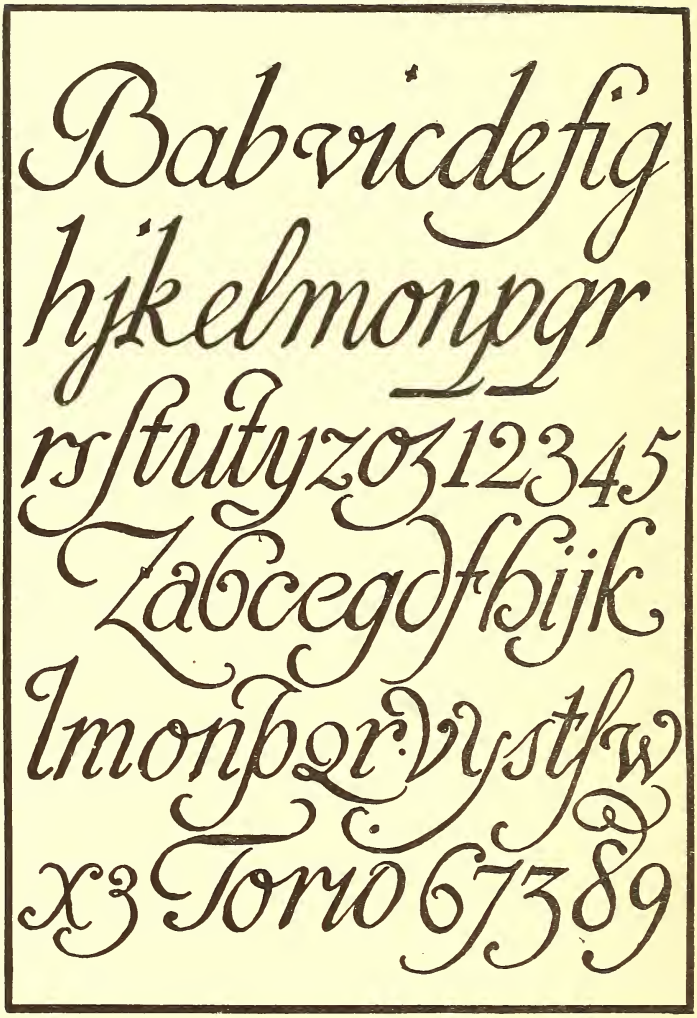
199. FRENCH SCRIPT CAPITALS 18th CENTURY. F. C. B.



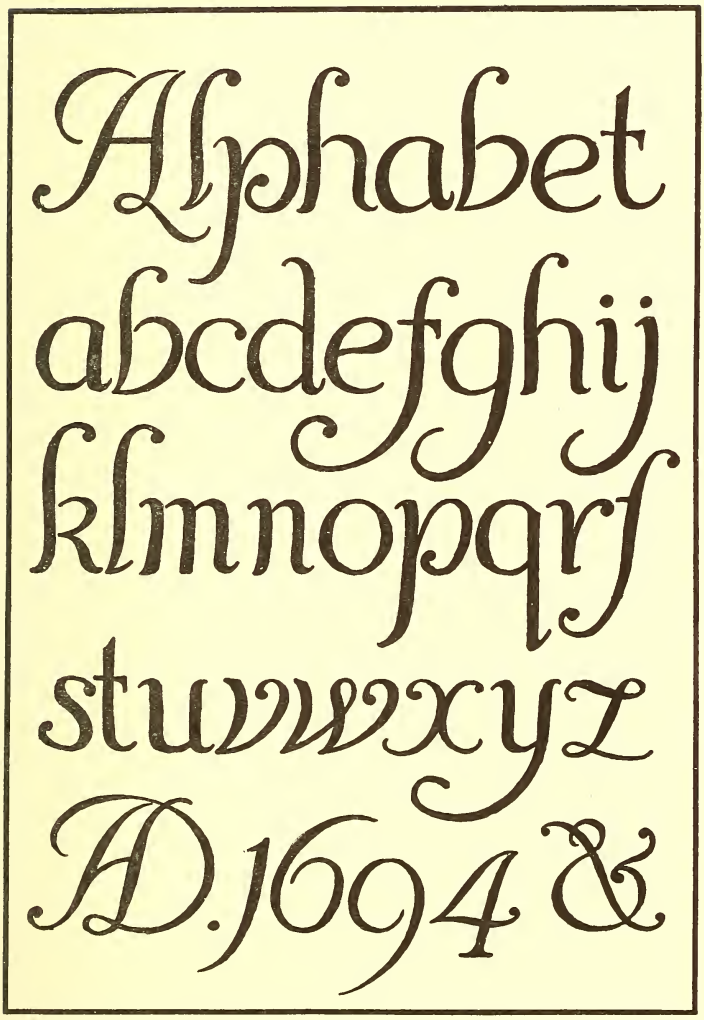
200. GERMAN SCRIPT AFTER HRACHOWINA 18th CENTURY



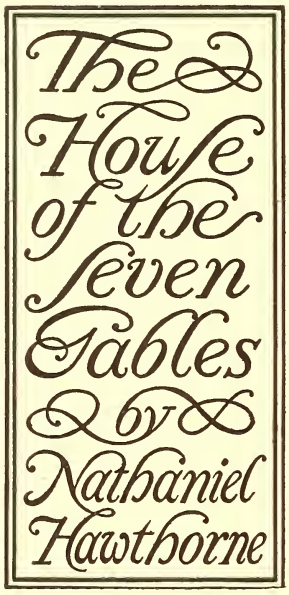
201. SPANISH SCRIPT CAPITALS EARLY 18th CENTURY. F. C. B.



202. SPANISH SCRIPT ALPHABETS LATE 17th CENTURY. F. C. B.



203. ENGLISH INCISED SCRIPT FROM INSCRIPTIONS. F. C. B.

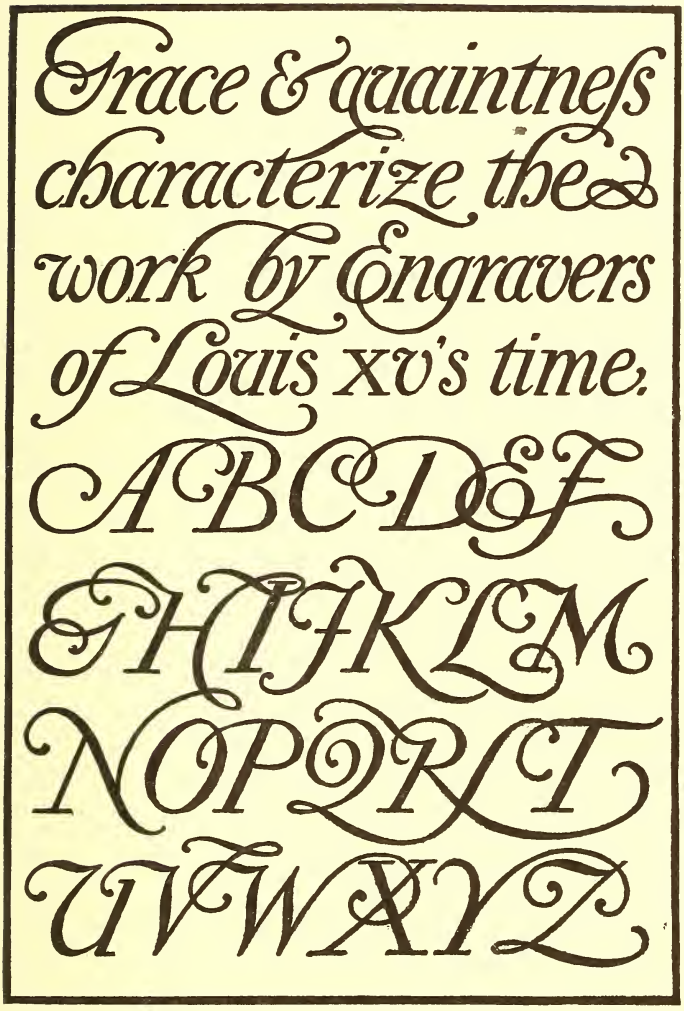


204. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE
BRUCE ROGERS

Among modern American designers, Mr. Bruce Rogers has admirably succeeded in catching the French and Georgian spirit in his treatment of the Script characters; yet, nevertheless, his lettering in this style is still modern in feeling. In the title from a book cover, 204, Mr. Rogers has allowed himself just the proper amount of interlacement and flourishing — both of which require the restraint of a subtle taste or the result may prove to be over-elaborate. The page of lettering by the same designer, shown in 205, is a successful solution of a difficult problem, and, together with the book cover, will serve to exhibit the possibilities of this style of Script.

Mr. George Wharton Edwards is another modern designer who has a penchant for the Script form. He uses one distinctive and personal style of it in which the larger letters are formed by two black lines separated by a narrow white space, as exhibited in 198.

The lines from an advertisement, 197, by Mr. Claude Fayette Bragdon, in which Script, Italic and Roman letters are combined, are of especial interest from the easy manner in which the three different styles have been adapted to each other and made to harmonize in one small panel,



205. MODERN AMERICAN SCRIPT BRUCE ROGERS

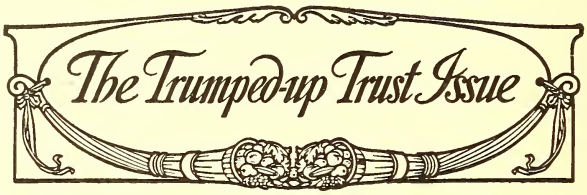


206. MODERN AMERICAN SCRIPT AFTER FRANK HAZENPLUG



207. MODERN AMERICAN ITALIC CAPITALS F. C. B.

while still preserving an appropriate Georgian aspect. The interlacement and flourishing, too, are handled with commendable restraint.



208. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE ANONYMOUS

Few modern artists have so successfully treated Italic capitals with Script freedom as Mr. Will Bradley. Sometimes employing forms of Italic capitals and small letters little removed from type, he will again give us an example of his handiwork in which Italic is used with examplary freedom, as is shown in the specimen from a book catalogue, 109. The modern trick of wide spacing often lends itself aptly to the swing and freedom of the swashed and flourished lines of Script, as may be seen in figure 207.



209. MODERN AMERICAN TITLE EDWARD PENFIELD

An excellent modern Script letter, adapted from a design by Mr. Frank Hazenplug, is shown in 206. Its heavy face and originality of form make it a useful and pleasing variant.

The magazine heading, by an anonymous designer, 208, and the line from the pen of Mr. Edward Penfield, 209, suggest still other useful varieties of the Script form.

CHAPTER V

TO THE BEGINNER

The beginner in any art or craft is likely to have an undue respect for the mere instruments of his trade. He will eventually learn that tools play a much less important part in his work than he at first thinks; but, as it is unlikely that any sudden change in human nature will occur, it seems as well to devote here some consideration to the tools which the student will always believe to be an important part of his equipment. He will ultimately ascertain for himself what is best adapted to his own individual needs.

Though every draughtsman will recommend a pen that he has discovered to be especially suitable for his own use, few will be found to agree. Perhaps it is safe to say, however, that the best all-round pen for lettering is the Gillot No. 303. It is not too sharp, and when broken in is flexible and easy. The crowquill pen will be found of little use. It is an advantage to have at hand a large coarse pen of little flexibility and smooth point for drawing heavy lines of even width. In using water-color in place of ink such a pen will be found more satisfactory than the Gillot 303, as the thinness of the fluid causes the line to spread whenever pressure is applied to a limber and finely pointed pen, with the result that the line is not only broadened, but when dry shows darker than was intended, as more color is deposited than in a narrow line. When a

narrow line of even width and sharpness is desired it is best to use a new pen; an older pen will, on the other hand, allow of more ease in swelling and broadening the line under pressure. A thin dry line may be obtained by turning the pen over and drawing with the back of the nib, although if the pen so used be worn it is apt to have a "burr" over the point that may prevent its working satisfactorily in this way. A new hard pen is likely to be the cause of a "niggling" line; a too limber one of a careless or undesirably broad line. On rare occasions, and for obtaining certain effects, a stub pen may be found of value, but it cannot be recommended to the beginner, as it is very difficult to find one that has sufficient flexibility of nib. Quill pens are undoubtedly useful in drawing a few types of letters (see some of the designs by Mr. Walter Crane shown in previous pages, for examples) but, not to allude to the difficulty of properly pointing a quill, which seems to be a well-nigh lost art nowadays, the instrument possesses so many annoying peculiarities that it is as well to avoid its use until a satisfactory command over the more dependable steel pens has been obtained.

A pencil is, of course, a necessity in laying out the first scheme for lettering. The softer the pencil the more felicitous will the composition seem; but the beginner should guard against being too easily pleased with the effect thus obtained, as it is often due to the deceptive indefiniteness of line and pleasant gray tone. When inked-in, in uncompromising black against the white paper, the draughtsman is apt to find that his sketch has developed many an imperfection, both in composition and in individual letter shapes, that the vague pencil lines did not reveal.

As to paper, Bristol-board has the best smooth surface for lettering. The English board is in some ways better than the American, but has the disadvantage of being made in smaller sheets. The difficulty with any smooth board is that erasures, even of pencil lines, are likely to spoil its surface. The rough "Strathmore" American board has a very grateful surface upon which the pen may be used with almost as much freedom as the pencil. All rough surfaces, however, while tending to promote interesting lines, are not suited for careful lettering, and the classic and Italian forms especially require to be drawn upon the smoothest possible surface. The American "Strathmore" board may also be obtained in smooth finish; and, indeed, is less injured by erasures than most Bristol-boards.

The prepared India or carbon inks such as "Higgin's" or "Carter's" are best for the beginner; although all prepared inks have a tendency to get muddy if allowed to stand open, and the so-called "waterproof" inks are easily smudged.

In devising a panel of lettering, such as a title-page for example, the draughtsman's first step would naturally be to sketch out the whole design at a very small size, say an inch and a half high, in pencil. This small sketch should determine, first, the general balance of the page; second, the inter-relations and spacings of the various lines and words and their relative importance and sizes. From this thumb-nail sketch the design should be drawn out at full size in pencil, and much more carefully. In this redrawing the separate letter shapes and their harmonious relations to each other should be determined, and such deviations made from the smaller sketch as seem to benefit the effect.

Some draughtsmen sketch out each line of lettering separately on thin paper, and then, after blackening the back of this sheet, lay each line over the place where it is needed in the design, tracing the outlines of the letters with a hard point, and thus transferring them to the design beneath. In this way a page of lettering may be studied out line by line, and accurately placed or centered; but the process is tedious, and there is always danger of losing sight of the effect as a whole.

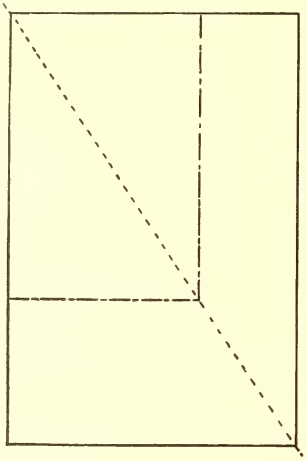
In outlining letters which are ultimately intended to be solidly blacked-in, the beginner should guard against making his outlines too wide, especially as regards the thin lines, for the eye in judging an outline sketch follows the insides of the bounding lines rather than the outsides which will really be the *out*lines of the blacked-in letter, so that when finished the letter is likely to look heavier and more clumsy than in the sketch.

When the entire pencil scheme seems satisfactory in every detail, and each line has been exactly determined, the whole should be carefully inked-in. In inking-in letters the swing of the arm should be as free and unobstructed as possible. For the best result it is absolutely necessary to work at a wide board on a solid table of convenient height and angle. It is impossible to letter well in a cramped or unsteady position. One thing cannot be too strongly urged upon the beginner. Never use a T-square, triangle or ruling pen in inking-in lettering. It will be found ultimately much easier to train hand and eye to make a straight and true line free-hand than to attempt to satisfactorily combine a ruled and free-hand line. The free-hand method is, be it acknowledged, both more lengthy and

difficult at first, but when the draughtsman does finally gain a mastery over his line he has achieved something which he will find of the greatest value.

In a drawing to be reproduced by mechanical processes, the proportions of the design are, of course, unalterably determined by the required panel or page; but the *size* of the *drawing* may be such as best suits the inclination and convenience of the draughtsman. If the drawing is to be reduced in size (and that is the usual method, because, in general, it is easier to draw large rather than small), the draughtsman must first decide on the amount of reduction to which his style of rendering and the subject itself are best adapted, remembering, however, that a drawing is sure to suffer from excessive reduction, not only in general effect but in interest, for the quality of the line is sure in a measure to disappear. A reduction of height or width by one-third is the usual amount; but many of our modern designers obtain their best effects by making their drawings but a trifle larger than the required reproduction. Some even make their drawings of the same size; others only from a twelfth to a sixth larger. As a rule, the less the reduction the less the departure from the effect of the original, and the more certainly satisfactory the result, although more careful drawing and greater exactness of line are necessary.

To keep the outlines of a panel in the same proportion while enlarging its area for the purpose of making a drawing for reproduction, lay out the required *finished* size of the panel near the upper left hand corner of the paper, and draw a diagonal line through the upper left hand and lower right hand corner of this panel, extending it beyond the panel



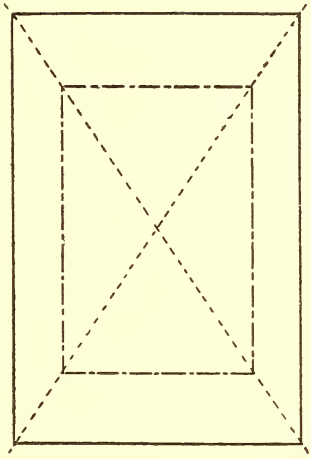
210. DIAGRAM TO SHOW METHOD OF ENLARGING A PANEL

boundaries. From any given point along this diagonal, lines drawn parallel to the side and top lines of the original panel, and extended till they intersect the extended left side line and top line of the original panel, will give an outline of the same proportions as the required panel. By taking various points on the diagonal, panels of any height or width but still of the proper proportions may be obtained (see diagram 210). Diagram 211 illustrates a variation of the previous method of enlarging the proportions of a panel, in which, by the use of two diagonals, both perpendicular and horizontal center lines are retained.

When it is necessary to lay out a border of a predetermined width within the required panel, the foregoing method can only be used to determine the *outside* lines of such a border, and it becomes necessary to make the drawing some numerical proportion, say, one-half as large again, or twice as large as the finished panel. The width of the border will then be of the same proportionate width.

The beginner will find it always wise to base his lettering on penciled top and bottom guide lines, and occasionally to add "waist" guide lines, as in 193. Indeed, it is rare that even accomplished letterers dispense with these simple aids. These guide lines should invariably be laid-in with the

T-square and triangle. After drawing the horizontal guides, it is often advisable to run a few perpendicular lines up and down the paper, which will serve to guard against the very common likelihood of the letters acquiring a tilt. In drawing Italic, Script, and all sloping letters, numerous sloping guide lines are especially necessary; see 193. Perpendicular guide lines will be found of marked assistance, also in drawing Gothic small letters, which, as they do not come against the top and bottom guide lines squarely, but at an angle, are often deceptive.



211. DIAGRAM TO SHOW METHOD OF ENLARGING A PANEL

If it is desirable to make two lines of lettering of the same length, although they contain an unequal number of letters, this may be effected — provided, of course, that the number of letters does not vary too greatly — by broadening or narrowing the letters that occur in one line but not in the other, and by varying the spacings about the I's and the open letters. Note, for example, the spacing of the upper lines in the poster by Mr. Crane, 87. It is by no means essential to draw the same letter always exactly alike even in the same line; in fact, variation is generally demanded by the different surroundings and neighboring letters. So long as the general character of the letter remains unchanged in its distinctive features, such as weight,

treatment of serifs, angles, height of waist and cross lines, etc., its width and outlines may be varied and arranged to help out the spacing without interfering, to any noticeable extent, with the uniform appearance of the line.

In Roman lettering emphasis may be obtained for any special word by spacing its letters farther apart. This has something of the same emphasizing effect as the use of Italic, without so greatly breaking the harmony of the line. Much of the lettering of the Italian Renaissance shows a very subtle appreciation of this use, and in some of the most beautiful inscriptions the important words are often so differentiated, while others are emphasized by slightly larger characters.

As a general rule, and within certain limits, the wider a letter the more legible it is likely to be. Blackness and boldness of stem alone will not make a letter readable. Width, boldness of hair lines and serifs, and a proper amount of surrounding white space are more essential. The Roman letter is more legible than the Blackletter mainly because it is black against a roomy white ground; while Blackletter, on the contrary, is really defined by small interrupted areas of whites upon a black ground.

A common limitation of many draughtsmen is that they become accomplished in the rendering of but one style of letter, and find themselves obliged to use it on all occasions, whether it be suited to the work in hand or not, because they can command no other. In the case of certain designers, of course, the individuality of their work is strong enough to bind both lettering and design so closely together that they can never seem at dissonance; but, speaking generally, the adherance to the use of but

one type of letter can be but narrowing. The beginner is urged, therefore, to practice the use of many styles, even at the expense of gaining an immediate mastery over no one form. He will find himself amply repaid in the end by the increase in freedom and variety.

While the student should possess enough knowledge of the historic styles and examples of lettering to prevent him from using incongruous or anachronous forms in the same design, historic accuracy need not prevent him from engrafting the characteristics of dissimilar styles upon one another, provided that the results prove harmonious and appropriate.

Finally, the draughtsman's first aim should be to make his lettering readable: after this has been accomplished he should strive to give it beauty. Art in lettering is only to be attained by solving the problem of legibility in the way most pleasing to the eye. Good lettering should appeal both to the eye and to the mind. Only when it combines legibility with beauty can it be excellent.

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